

MEMOIRS

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MEMOIRS

MADAME DE BARNEVELDT.

I WAS born in the midst of the forest of Ardennes, and I owe my education to a Recluse who had retired thither, and who preserved me from a death the most cruel:—to him was I indebted for my life—I regarded him with reason as my father—on his part he loved me as a daughter, and bestowed on me every mark of affection truly paternal.

We lived together in a hut which was the work of his own hands—our dresses were composed of the skins of those beast who had fallen by his arm, which, though enfeebled by years, still retained sufficient strength to make it of use to us: he gave me weapons

to accompany him in the chase, which exercise was sometimes varied by the culture of a small, but beautiful garden, situated behind our cottage, the fertility of which was increased by the same river that served us to satisfy the humble demands of nature, and allay the thirst of labour and fatigue.

Nothing was neglected by the venerable Hermit to store my mind with information; he made me understand, at an early age, that there was a Being who ruled over the whole universe—Superior—Independent—and absolute Master of all Things. He would not have me either ignorant or forgetful of the first grand principle on which our religion is founded, from the beginning of the world to the perfecting of our knowledge by the bright era of Christianity. Keep all these things in remembrance, he would say, they alone will cause you to persevere in the road of virtue.

It was thus that my preceptor would often talk to me in short sentences, instead of using many words, with which in general the minds of children are overcharged, without making

making them form any idea clearly of what they have been taught. He led me by the light of reason—his lessons were not long or fatiguing, but they were frequent, and delivered with wisdom.

That Sovereign God (would he say) who all the world adores under different names and symbols! It is he that conducted me to this forest, where I saved you from inevitable death. It is this God who impresses on my heart the affections of a father for you. It is he who gives the day that lights you—the clothes that covers—the food that sustains you—the clear water you drink—the air you breathe—it is only his bounty that bestows them upon you.

Neither was he less eloquent when speaking to me on the love of virtue—love virtue and cherish it, he would say; it will procure to you that happy tranquillity of heart, that ease of mind which will not forsake you on the day when you must abandon this solitude to enter upon a world abounding with temptations, inviting you at every step to grasp at them; but whoever lays hold on forbidden pleasures,

pleasures, catches a serpent, whose sting is deadly.

One part of my infancy passed away without my having seen any thing beyond the forest where I was bred, and I imagined the commencement of its boundaries to be the beginning of the world, and that my guardian and myself were its sole inhabitants. Afterwards I grew wiser; yet when I did know that the world was much more spacious, that it was filled with people like ourselves, still I had no wish to mingle with them; accustomed to solitude, I was never sad; I could run without ceasing in the woods, gather the wild flowers with which it abounded, and had no conception of any pleasure beyond that of hunting in the society of my aged Mentor.

I now advanced in years; twelve times had I seen the trees despoiled of their verdure, and as often observed soft spring approach to re-robe them in their mantle of green: these changes in the seasons astonished me—I could not comprehend how cold so rigorous should, in

in the space of a few weeks, give place to heat the most excessive.

The Recluse smiled to see how I had entangled my ideas in difficulties of my own creating, and afterwards helped me to conquer them, by explaining every thing that, without his assistance, I could not have expounded. He took inexpressible pleasure in the progress of my reasoning faculties, which were literally the fruit of his own labours; but a change soon happened in his conduct towards me, that surprised me more than any thing that had yet passed under my observation.

Until the time of which I have been speaking he had accustomed me to receive from him a thousand tender caresses, ever procuring for me amusements proportionated to my age, but now by degrees, almost imperceptibly, I found him more serious in his manners, more reserved in his attentions, and more respectful in his approaches to the little girl who he hitherto had treated as his plaything and his darling; yet these changes were unmixed with coldness or neglect, though they filled

me with alarm, and I very innocently demanded the cause of them with tears in my eyes.

“Alas! my child,” he replied, “I still retain the same sentiments, the same affectionate heart towards thee, but custom demands that the expression of my kindness should be as you find it.” He paused for a moment, and then proceeded.

“I have often told you that the world is peopled by an infinite number of inhabitants, yet I have left you ignorant of the essential difference between them. You have profitted so well by the instruction I have already bestowed upon you, that I am convinced your senses are enough open to receive and understand what I am now going to say to you.

“The surface of the earth is covered by intelligent beings; their form like ours, their intellectual powers such as our own, they are classed in two divisions, and only distinguished by the word sex; the first are called men; the second, women; who, if they do not suffer themselves to be lead away by those follies

folly, which are named passions, are created for the happiness of each other: but often, very often, my child, do we see them rendered miserable, by indulging sentiments which tyrannize over their youth, and render old age despicable.

“Far, very far gone by is that period, when passions of every description were extinguished from the breast of him who is speaking to thee; conscious of thy safety, yet would I guard thee with the most sacred care, and may the respect I pay the female sex in your person be a model of that reserve with which it will be incumbent on you to receive the devoirs of mankind; a sort of idle homage that will be paid to beauty like your’s when you shall enter into the world.”

“Ah! I do not desire any other world than this,” cried I, interrupting him with vivacity.

“You hardly know what you will hereafter desire,” said he, smiling; “do you suppose you are always to live within the confines of our forest? you are mistaken: the

time must come when you will find yourself a busy citizen in a busy world; when you will see yourself environed on every side by men and by women. Yes, your destiny some time hence, God knows how soon it may be, will conduct you to a world, with which you will be delighted—it will be replete with charms—it will present you with nothing but novelties. But, dear child, it is then that you will be in the midst of perils, without perceiving the danger of your situation; men, women, and vices that assume the figures of pleasures, will all conspire to seduce you from the paths of duty.”

“And do you think,” I replied, “that I will ever venture myself there, except you go with me & not I indeed; but with you I shall be safe every where.”

“Suppose then, my child, we set out together for this (to you) unknown land.”

“Ah! my dear father, I am ready to attend you this moment.”

“What, Rosalie! and in our habits of skin?”

“And

“ And why not? sure the people that look and speak, think and act so like ourselves, must also dress as we do.”

“ *Apropos*, my child—I have been dreaming, and it is thy very natural observation that awakens me: another time I will make up for my omission, and explain some particulars which I have too long neglected to do, as my silence leads thee into an error the most ridiculous.”

“ Let it be now—pray father, let it be now—I am not tired—I could listen to you for ever.”

“ Be it so then;” and he proceeded.

“ Your idea that all men and women dress like us is truly laughable; the ridicule of which it is impossible you should understand, until, like them, you become the votary of that idol which in the world is very generally worshipped,”

“ Of what nature is this idol you talk of, and who made it?”

“ The

“The nature of it is a compound of inconsistencies, ever varying, never decided. Wise men treat it with respect, fools adore it; all human hands are coadjutant in first constructing it, and afterwards in pulling it to pieces. It is never long in the same form, but whatever shape it is made to put on is sure to please better than the last. Its birth is coeval with the earth, but its name, I believe, is more modern.”

“Ah, father! pray tell me what is the name of this charming thing.”

“We call it Fashion, my child; and though we would be thought to consider it as a shadow, there are a multitude of people who pay court to it with much more affectionate homage than to the Divinity who created them,”

“And pray is it this Almighty Fashion who will not let you and I appear beyond our forest in these habits? for what, I should be glad to know, would she have us exchange them?”

“For

“ For very different ones,” he replied, “ and not more dissimular in texture than in form : there are dresses peculiar to the sexes and the season. I have clothed you like myself, to screen you from the scandal of those travellers it was not impossible chance might have conducted to our wood ; but notwithstanding this precaution, were we to inhabit towns, instead of hiding ourselves in obscurity, it would be easy enough for the clear sighted to discover your sex ; there is no disguise under which its exclusive delicacy can be concealed ; and you are also to understand that those who dwell in cities are much more occupied about others than about themselves. They do not stop at mere observation, for where no harm meets the eye they are ever ready to raise its shadow, because they feel a sort of mortification to witness in another, perhaps more lovely than themselves, a conduct free from reproach.”

I no longer interrupted him with childish questions—no sense remained to me but that of hearing, and he continued.

“ Happily

“Happily the habit you wear, and the desert we inhabit, will not permit either men or women to misconstrue the care I have taken of your education; but, my daughter, if you and I lived in the world, friendship, fainted and pure like that between us, would, perhaps, in the minds of evil, malevolent censurers, be adduced from motives injurious to your innocence and my honour. Hide then, as much as possible, your person from observation, lest, by chance, you should encounter any straggling men in this solitude; should that ever happen, fly from them I charge you—fly from them, and think you have escaped an enemy, who would destroy you, from whom you have every thing to fear.”

This counsel astonished me more than all the other wonders he had been relating. It seemed a perfect paradox, never to be reconciled; that he should at once have told me men were reasonable beings, that we were formed for the happiness of each other, and yet warn me to fly from them as the bitterest of my foes; but I was afraid to reveal the
difficulty

difficulty I could not solve, and for this time our conversation ended.

It happened soon after that I strayed much farther from our hut in one of my morning rambles, than (when quite alone) I had ventured to do before. The admonitions of my beloved Recluse were the constant companions of my most silent hours; they had taken full possession of my mind, when my sight was suddenly arrested by certain figures not very distantly related to the thoughts that occupied me: there were three persons, one of which, from his habit and the masculine features of his face, I supposed to be a man, whilst the delicate faces and white arms of the other two made it not difficult for me to guess that they must be women; nor was I wrong in either of these conjectures. Their dress too had something in it that pleased me exceedingly. The man I also thought very agreeable, though his air was more robust, more fierce, and his voice (for they were all speaking) much more strong and less musical. He was mounted, as were his two companions, on a sort of animal, which, in my haste to find out a likeness for amongst those of our forest, I could

could resemble only to a large stag. The head of this beast was ornamented with ribbands, and it seemed to move proudly without feeling the burden it carried.

Amongst all the curiosities in which I had so lately been instructed, my preceptor omitted to tell me there was any such thing as a horse, or that it was the custom of man to get upon the back of this noble creature, and to conduct it at pleasure, so that I might as well have taken it for a monster as a stag.

My spirits hitherto were pretty composed, or rather lulled into inaction, by the powers of surprise and admiration so new to me; but then took the alarm, and I was thrown into the severest fright, when the gentleman addressed himself to me, desiring I would lead them out of the forest.

Whilst I considered more attentively the three persons before me, this abrupt question was asked, and the fears that took possession of all my faculties, made me unable to answer it. They certainly took me for a young savage boy. My habiliments of skin, joined to
an

an air extremely disconcerted; my confused silence—my incorrigible stupidity, must have confirmed them in this idea, and it was undoubtedly pity for my supposed unfortunate state that occasioned me to receive the invitation to go with them, an offer that added so greatly to my terrors, that I set up the most hideous cry, which resounded through the forest; at the same time I drew an arrow from my quiver, and retired, menacing them at every step, and they, frightened at seeing a child so fierce, abandoned the desire of protecting me.

My venerable friend, who was very much delighted with the rehearsal of my achievement, continued to instruct me in every thing which would one day be useful to me. He did not confine his information merely to the modes, manners, and prejudices of the world at large, but led me into the cabinets of the great, and was my guide in the intricacies of policy. He talked to me of the different princes who had governed over different countries; brought me acquainted with the dispositions of the people, as well as potentates, and made me understand the nature of wars, of revolutions, and of the victories gained by
one

one nation over another; the various interests which perpetuates monarchs; the progress of arts and science in a well-governed country; the ruinous consequences of tyranny and injustice. He let me into the most remarkable *traits* of history, and explained to me how much he had mingled with the great world—a truth that discovered itself in all his actions. He had served with the troops of France in the time of Henry the Fourth: his memory was happy and retentive; he related with exactness the revolutions which marked the reigns of Charles the Ninth and Henry the Third, replete with rebellions, with crimes, with all sorts of disaster—these were engraven on his mind, a memoir from which I read as from a book.

One day when he had been recounting anecdotes of this (to me) wonderful world, I asked him, why it was that he lived in the forest of Ardennes?

He looked at me—I shall never forget the expression of that look.—“It is,” said he, in faltering accents—“it is to indulge a just grief for the loss of a wife I adored.....

Here

Here she is ever present to my thoughts. . . . It is for this dear privilege that I have withdrawn from the haunts of men—it is here that I acquire true liberty, which is that of the soul—it is here that I know even more than ever how inestimable was this beloved wife. . . . I have nothing to do with a world of which she is no longer an inhabitant—I have nothing to do but to weep ! ”

“ Ah ! ” cried I, the tears of sympathy running down my cheeks ; “ Ah ! my dear father ! what fatal blow deprived you of a wife so dear ? ”

He shook his head ; “ It was my own culpable credulity,” he replied, “ and the wickedness of a woman, who, from revenge, plunged herself into an abyss of guilt.”

With a curiosity natural to my sex I prayed him, with avidity, that he would recount to me his history.

“ I will do it,” cried he—“ Yes, my child, I will paint for you a character the most noble, and I shall feel consolation in talking to you of

this adored object, who, after a long series of years, the common soothers of distress, is still the everlasting monument of my unabated, unceasing, exquisite regret."

*History of the Count de *****.*

I was born, said he, at Anvers, where I passed the first days of my youth. At that age, when all young men pay the tribute of their hearts, I loved Mademoiselle Welbek, a girl rich in the endowments of graces and accomplishments, but to whom fortune had denied those gifts, which, in the opinion of men, are generally considered best calculated to draw attention. It is a fordid, yet common idea, that the gem of wealth is the only requisite to make your sex captivating.

The birth of my mistress was equal to my own, and, being touched with a lively passion by her charms and her virtues, I demanded her in marriage. My demand was rejected; she would not consent to an union she called disproportioned, and calculated to injure me in
my

my interest, as well as in the estimation of a world who would very naturally condemn my imprudence.

In vain her family represented to her the advantages that must result from my alliance. She would not hear them on the subject without repeating the cruel sentence she had a hundred times announced to myself. "I will never," she would say, "join my destiny with that man, who, from my very acceptance of him, may have cause to suspect that his fortune is the price of my affection: I must be in every respect on a level with my husband, or I will never marry."

Grieved, vexed, disappointed, loving to distraction, yet forced to receive her rejection as determined, positive, and final, I ceased further sollicitations to be made happy. I thought absence would be the grave of a love, not mutual; yet, before I resolved on quitting her for ever, I could not resist one more effort in effect as useless as the former.

Content with her humble fortune, she would not barter her heart for riches that were

unnecessary to her felicity. A soul, so noble, so sincere, so independent, redoubled that affection, already too violent; despair, at having failed in my last attempt to get possession of such a treasure, made me resolve on quitting Anvers.

The Low Countries were plunged in the troubles caused by that tyrant the Duc d'Anjou, brother of Henry the Third, King of France: he fought against the Duc de Parme for the interest at once of our liberties and fortunes. I soon took a resolution of joining my arms to the former of these princes, greedily seizing this occasion of leaving my native place, and of being useful to the Duc d'Anjou.

Never did campaign end more unfortunate to an army in general, or to an individual in particular. The French Prince rushed on without money, to lead his troops where it appeared to him he should be successful in taking, without resistance, some of the Duc de Parme's best places; but, alas! we lost by our rashness every thing we had before gained by our prudence. Amongst the rest of the
plunder

plunder went the greatest part of my riches ; they were taken by the Spanish in the last town of which they made themselves masters. All that remained to me of my former possessions was, comparatively speaking, a mere trifle. . . . Thanks be to Heaven ! I cried, the wealth of which I am robbed has been the obstacle to my happiness with Mademoiselle Welbek, perhaps the only one ; it is removed, and I may be successful.

This was the first comfortable suggestion that started to my heated imaginations ; but, on more cold reflection, it occurred that her refusal of my hand, on account of my riches, might be nothing more than pretence to cover an unconquerable dislike that she had imbibed for my person. In short, I had no reasonable hope of being united to the only woman in the world to whom my whole soul was devoted,

I will not tire you, my child, with a description of those wars which stained the throne of France with gore ; but I will tell you that the valour of the Spanish infantry ceded at last to the fury of the Flemish troops,

and that we bought our liberties at the price of our blood.

The strength of my passion for Mademoiselle Welbek increased daily. It carried me back to Anvers, and, on my return thither, I went to live in the same quarter of the town that she inhabited, where I could sometimes have the felicity of beholding her. Fearful, however, of another repulse, I did not seek to renew my addresses; but destiny would have it otherwise, and destiny decides every thing.

I happened one day to meet the idol of my love walking, and alone. The opportunity was not to be resisted. I called to my aid all the courage that was left me—I ran towards her, and, throwing myself at her feet, “ You see before you,” I cried, “ the unfortunate Count de *****, who has nothing now remaining to offer you but his heart; abandoned by fortune, he has retained no other treasure than his affection for you. . . . Ah! say that, he who in opulence you rejected, you will receive in mediocrity ! ”

She

She held out her hand with an air of tenderness that could only be inspired by love. She commanded me to rise—she gave me permission to visit her—her heart, generous as it was affectionate, changed with my condition, and I found myself the happiest of mankind.

In one of those charming *tête-à-têtes*, so endeared by sentiments like those we felt for each other, I was enlarging on the theme of that reverence with which I respected the nobleness, the delicacy, the grandeur, that united to constitute her character.

She listened to me with bashful diffidence, whilst her charming face was rendered more charming by the suffusion of blushes that overspread it. “I will confess to you,” she said in a voice of more than usual softness; “Yes, Count, I will confess that I have ever loved you, and that I suffered some violence in combatting with my affections, when I saw a distance placed between us, which appeared to separate us for ever; I would not have had you think that I loved you for your wealth, neither would I put
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myself

myself in a situation to be classed with those unfortunates who are generally the victims of their own indiscretion, by contracting marriages where the inequality is glaring."

"Yet you *did* love me," cried I, interrupting her with transport; "you *do* love me: you will *always* love me, because to my felicity you make a sacrifice, of which you seem yourself unconscious."

"Then tell me what it is?" she replied with a gay air, "that I may at least have the merit of knowing the value of my offering."

"You give up your favourite opinion," said I, in the same tone, "respecting unequal alliances,"

"Impossible," she replied; "you must have misunderstood me."

"No, it is because I *do* understand you that I am able to prove my allegation. There was once, it is true, an artificial distance that Fortune had placed to divide us—this difficulty she, of her goodness, has removed, but the
real

real advantages of soul that you possess over me, what less than your own condescension could have reduced to any thing like equality."

"You are at liberty," said she, smiling, "to think of me as well as you can; but, as to the truth of my own argument, I remain unshaken. Build your esteem for me on the same basis on which I have erected mine to you, and we ought to be satisfied with each other."

"Satisfied!" I repeated; "Oh! I am a thousand times more than satisfied with the glory of my fate! That respect, joined to the love I bear you, is enforced by every sentence you utter. It would not be in the power of the universe to make me a present so rich as you have done, in giving me your whole heart. It is now only that I quarrel with my destiny, that I deplore my poverty: had I retained my possessions, still you would have pitied, you would have loved, you would have shared them with me,"

"Ah!

“ Ah, Count ! ” she replied, “ is it riches that constitute the soft, the tender, the tranquil moments of our life ? Believe me, these depend more on ourselves than on any secondary cause. Whoever possesses a sensible mind will be satisfied with his own integrity—Faith, honour, constancy, will be the best jewels in his crown : he will wish for no superfluities—they will not be necessary to his happiness.”

Guess, my child, what must have been my adoration of this divine woman ? I would not have interrupted her for worlds ; I was almost afraid to draw my breath, lest a syllable that came from her lips might have escaped me.

I listened, but she remained silent for a moment ; then added, as a sort of climax to what she had just been saying, “ For my part, I am perfectly contented,”

“ You *must* not be contented—you *shall* not be contented,” cried I, “ until you allow me to unite the name of husband to that of lover ;

lover; on any other terms it would kill me to see you contented."

Her answer to this rhapsody startled me.—
 "I am going," said she, "to be extremely candid, and I desire you to exert all your good humour, that you might be able to give me a patient audience—know then that I have ever entertained the most invincible fears respecting marriage, and I think nothing can cure me of them."

"What a prejudice!" I exclaimed.

"Spare me," said she; "my fears do not arise from prejudice, but from observation. How often have I seen marriage extinguish, as water does fire, the most ardent affection, whilst love is kept alive by a thousand delicate, but nameless attentions, and it is to these alone to which I will be indebted for my happiness."

"And to them only you shall be indebted," I cried: "never, never shall I cease to adore you."

"I fin-

“ I sincerely believe such are your intentions,” she replied; “ but these fears, of which I have been speaking, are so deeply engraven on my mind, that they deter me from making the experiment. How seldom do we witness these delicacies, these attentions, preserved after marriage, even between those who seem to set sail on their voyage for life with a full freight of constancy and affection. Souls made to assimilate should not only be capable of friendship, but from that source wish to derive all their enjoyments; for I sincerely believe every other union is the bane of affection, and I cannot, indeed I cannot, expose myself to the grief of finding you different to what you now are, by giving you my hand, with conviction before my eyes, that by the very gift itself your heart will be alienated from me; the bare idea of which makes my whole frame vibrate with horror.”

I will not continue to enlarge on every part of this pleasing, painful interview, as I have done from its origin: on the contrary, I shall only tell you, my child, that Mademoiselle Welbek resisted my tears, my cries,
my

my intreaties; that she would recal the sentence, which should for ever condemn me to a life of celibacy. I was conquered, and she remained victorious, but used the advantage she had gained over me with so great clemency, that in a few weeks the tortures succeeding my disappointment, if not entirely subdued, became at least much less intolerable.

The pleasures of a friendship so innocent as that into which we were now entered, seemed, like marriage itself, to be authorised by man, and ratified by Heaven: so entirely was I occupied by this conceit, the connection so pure, so novel, that I thought of nothing else, nor in any manner troubled myself about the world, or any object in it, one only excepted.

Alas! my daughter, it is not enough that we know our actions to be blameless; we must submit to rise or fall at the praise or censure of less impartial judges than ourselves. My frequent visits to this young lady began to be spoken of by her family and her neighbours; all Anvers was soon instructed

ed in our mutual partiality; they called it an amour, and it made a frightful noise through every part of the town.

Mademoiselle Welbek, wrapped up in the robe of angel purity, let these calumniators amuse themselves for some time.—“I love but you,” said she; “I do not suffer in your esteem; I merit that of the public, whose reproaches I meet with composure, because I do not deserve them.”

“Ah! dearest creature,” I cried, “you have begun my happiness; complete it, I beseech you; banish all fears, that a passion so rooted as mine, the slave of charms like your’s should ever expire; your mind and person shall be the pledges of its duration: hesitate no longer; let me seize upon this beautiful hand—let me call it my own, though you should have no other motive for obliging me than to silence those cruel reports, injurious to a fame the most spotless, a reputation the most sacred. I am resolved to guard it with my life, and will rise no more from your feet, till you have pronounced my felicity.”

“Rise

Too happy, that she would condescend to become the mistress of my destiny, I would not leave her till she had named the following day for that of our Hymen, which, in despite of her forebodings, I conceived would bring with it the most exquisite and lasting felicity. Alas! she was the better calculator. Men are not created to taste of felicity, exquisite or lasting, for here was the beginning of my troubles, and the end of my tranquillity.

Already, my child, I have been perhaps tediously prolix, but you must still have patience with me, for I am going to recount the latter part of my history, even with greater minuteness than I bestowed upon the former.—All the words that have passed on many occasions are engraven on my memory, and dear to my heart; I recal with pleasure, meliorated by grief, the precious remembrances, and shall miss none of them in my recital.

Madam Vanker, a young widow, rich, and of charms nearly equal to those of the Countess, my wife, first began to poison the
enjoyments

“ Rise then,” said Mademoiselle Welbek; “ rise, my dear Count, for your sake more than my own, I consent to every thing you require of me. Yes, I will renounce my errors—I will surmount my objections—I will yield up all, every one of my prejudices; but remember I tell you we shall both repent it, and both be unhappy.”

“ Away with these prognostics,” cried I, joyfully; “ I shall sicken to death if you any longer entertain doubts so much in my disfavour: what can you have to dread in an union with the man who adores you? who”—I was going on, but she stopped me; laid her hand upon mine, sighed deeply, and with a smile, whose only expression was that of sadness, laying her other hand on her own breast, she exclaimed, “ I cannot distinguish what it is that lays so heavy *here*, but it is something the most horrible, which I would not retain, yet cannot dismiss. Yes, I would expel it if I could. It tells me terrible things; it fills me with forebodings of misery. Forgive my superstition—I will no more torment you with weaknesses, for which I can hardly pardon myself.”

“ Too

enjoyments of my new union. Her sense was not inferior to her beauty, but she was artful, cunning, and intemperate; she executed her projects with vivacity; was determined and vindictive; nothing was so equivocal as her love, nothing so perilous as her hate.

I had often seen this woman, and in a character the more dangerous, because, to me unknown, she wore her vices with discretion; and veiled them under the semblance of virtue. She loved me, and let me perceive it; but I have not to reproach myself for returning a passion so odious, so degrading, to that with which I burnt for my wife; so dishonourable to my own character—so offensive to Heaven!

Madam Vanker placed entirely to the Countess's charge the studied coldness with which I repelled her advances; she therefore considered her as a rival, and treated her as an enemy. Her love augmented with my neglect; she gave me many hints, that it was too visible to escape her observation, and at last, throwing aside all reserve, she avowed

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enjoyments of my new union. Her sense was not inferior to her beauty, but she was artful, cunning, and intemperate; she executed her projects with vivacity; was determined and vindictive; nothing was so equivocal as her love, nothing so perilous as her hate.

I had often seen this woman, and in a character the more dangerous, because, to me unknown, she wore her vices with discretion; and veiled them under the semblance of virtue. She loved me, and let me perceive it; but I have not to reproach myself for returning a passion so odious, so degrading, to that with which I burnt for my wife; so dishonourable to my own character—so offensive to Heaven!

Madam Vanker placed entirely to the Countess's charge the studied coldness with which I repelled her advances; she therefore considered her as a rival, and treated her as an enemy. Her love augmented with my neglect; she gave me many hints, that it was too visible to escape her observation, and at last, throwing aside all reserve, she avowed

her shameful predilection, upon which I ceased to visit her.

My wife took notice that I no longer went to the house of this woman, and demanded the cause. I was agitated by the question, and gave but a confused, vague kind of reason for my conduct: this alarmed her heart, and she said to herself he certainly loves me no longer; he goes not to Madam Vanker, the better to conceal from me the intrigue between them. Her imagination tinged by jealousy, she saw in me a husband unfaithful, grew uneasy and melancholy; the war raised in her delicate mind by a variety of feeling, at length affected her health; I knew the nature of her disease, was distracted by its consequences, and thinking I possessed the only remedy that could be applied with success, "My ingenuous confession," said I, "shall remove this disquietude, shall restore her to health, and me to her confidence."

Full of hope in the efficacy of this expedient, I revealed to her the passion of Madam Vanker, and the contempt with which I had treated it; and congratulated myself

myself in having banished from her thoughts the unjust suspicions that she had suffered so long to torment her: but a discovery soon followed, that shewed me I had acted imprudently, by entrusting her with a secret on which depended the character of a woman of fashion. Alas! what can a man withhold from the wife he adores?

I conjured the Countess not to divulge what I had confided to her; she, notwithstanding my caution, found out the means to let her rival know that she was informed of her folly; she also took occasion to give her some marks of her displeasure, which exasperated the other exceedingly: indignation, united with illicit love and furious jealousy, made Madam Vanker quite outrageous, and she resolved to be revenged on the Countess and myself; she would have been right enough in punishing me for an indiscretion so culpable as that I had committed against her, had I been the sole object of her diabolical resentment; had she let my innocent wife escape its overwhelming tide which bore down all before it, I could have loved—

I could have blessed—I could have called her merciful.

For some time she resisted her desire of vengeance, only to make it more complicated, more tremendous. Unfortunately, Madam Vanker's imprudence had blazed out beyond the walls of our own residence; the public had caught hold of it, and recognized it with a great deal of severity; this enlargement of the fatal secret was owing to the Countess having let drop some hints before people not so much interested in preserving it as we were; the spreading of scandal, true or false, is to some a business, to others a recreation: no wonder then, that where so many were employed, this affair of Madam Vanker's disgrace should readily find a passage from tongue to tongue, and from house to house, or that it should travel with the velocity of lightning.

This guilty, unfortunate woman, mistress of arts, and an adept in dissimulation, contrived, by her skilful management, to make it appear as if she herself was the only person uninformed of the scandal she had created;

ated; it was merely a pretence, that, by throwing us off our guard, we might put ourselves in her power till she had prepared the garment which was to wrap us in everlasting misery.

To accomplish the plan of our destruction, she appeared with double portions of counterfeited modest reserve and diffidence; accident often threw her in our way, and she took pains to make us believe that she considered me only with indifference: she dug the pit, and we very naturally fell into it. My wife, who possessed a soul soft as firm, gentle as exalted, thinking her reformed from error, and seeing that she had injured her in the public opinion, forgot that she had ever been her rival, courted the renewal of her acquaintance, and received her again as a friend, whom nothing but a mistake had separated: this gave a new turn to the sentiments of a busy world, and Madam Vanker came to us, and saw us at her own house as usual.

The venerable Recluse here broke in upon his narrative, by bidding me observe, and

profit by the lesson of experience he was teaching me. "There is much to be learnt, my child," said he, "from the woes of others, if we consider that they may one day be our own; follow what is good, avoid what is evil; and observe that it was intrigue that robbed me of the tranquillity of my life. Alas! am I not too severely banished for my stupid credulity?"

I fobbed out my assent.

"No," cried he, "Providence has been too gracious, too lenient in its chastisement of my imprudence. But why! ah! why did it visit my sins on the head of my adorable wife? why was not I permitted to be the only victim of infernal vengeance?"

The violence of his affliction was as lively as it could have been at the moment he lost this dear, regretted wife, who he had mourned so many, many years; whose fate had inspired him with despair, and led him to the forest of Ardennes. His agitations were at last quelled, and he proceeded.

Charmed

Charmed at the reform of Madam Vanker, we continued our intimacy, to repair the injury our indiscretion had brought upon her character. Two months thus passed on, and the wretch, whose breast was solely occupied by vengeance, did not discover by her face the treachery she concealed in her heart; her conduct to my wife had no tincture of animosity that could betray the designs she harboured: on the contrary, when we were sometimes alone, she would recount the virtues, and enumerate the beauties of the Countess; congratulating me on my felicity in being beloved by her; and all this in a manner from which sincerity itself might have borrowed new graces.

Several months glided away on the downy wings of love, friendship, and confidence; our example had taught the world to respect Madam Vanker; the old story seemed to be forgotten, and no more tales were circulated to her disadvantage; when, on a sudden, that detestable woman ceased any longer to entertain me with the praises of my angel wife; her plans were now more ripe for execution; she took pains to make me understand she

knew something, and that the knowledge of it distressed her,

These artful insinuations were given with an air so embarrassed, as for a long time prevented me from demanding the cause of her chagrin—she saw my fears of being thought impertinent held me back; this silence by no means suited the interest of her project; she then renewed her attack by another and more certain road to conquer all that God had given me of rational understanding. She would sigh, she would look at me with tears standing in her eyes; there was nothing of love in their glances; the whole of their language spoke only commiseration, but spoke it plainly: she would watch the turn of mine, and when she had fixed them on herself, seem to forget that I was present, and cry out, “What will become of him?”

All the ideas of my heart were presently collected to one point, and plunged me into the most mortal inquietude. I insisted that she should tell me why I was become the object of her compassion, and why her words threatened me with some terrible calamity?
but

but her answer served only to increase my disorder.

“What are you about?” would she say: ‘you men are ever ready to torment yourselves for nothing; do you not know me for your best friend? can I be otherwise, sensible as I am of the obligations I owe you—you have once saved me from imprudence, and shall not I save you from destruction, should you stand in need of my assistance? Ah! Count, from gratitude alone your peace, your reputation is dear to me. I shall take upon me to be the guardian of them; if I am now reserved, my reserve argues your safety; depend upon me for telling you every thing it is necessary that you should know, but do not expect me to fill up your head with vapours which will undoubtedly evaporate without our interference.”

I often renewed my intreaties; I begged as for an alms, to have my intolerable suspense done away, but she remained inflexible: during the many weeks she held my thoughts in slavery, my suspicions were augmented by the receipt of many anonymous letters glancing

cing slightly at some misconduct in my Countess, the last of which being more scurrilous than any of the former, I flew like a madman to Madam Vanker. She had not yet risen from her toilet. I desired she would dismiss her attendants, shut the door, and produced the letters that had almost deprived me of my senses. I bade her read them, and, if she did not desire to see me dead at her feet, to explain the dark hints by which she had too often wounded my peace. "They must," cried I, "connect with this cursed malevolent business. . . You say you are my friend, prove it this instant; we part no more till you have, without reservation, let me into all the information concerning it, of which I know you are in possession,"

After having examined the letters with marked attention, she returned them to me, saying, at the same time, "this is a very delicate affair, Count, and I profess I do not know how to act in it."

"There is but one possible way for you to pursue," said I fiercely, "and you know my determination."

"I pity

“ I pity you,” she replied calmly ; “ but your threats do not terrify me : I would be your soother, *not* your tormenter. Repossess yourself ; this affair, I tell you, will blow over : I dare say the Countess, in reality, is the least culpable of any body who intermeddles in her affairs, and try to make mischief between you.”

“ I know it, I know it,” cried I ; “ she is an Angel, and all those who would injure her are . . . Devils ! ”

“ Now,” returned Madam Vanker, “ you are just what I would have you to be. To reason with a man, who has banished reason, is to throw away our best things to a bad purpose.”

“ You think my wife innocent *then*, and you are pleased with me, because I am of the same opinion ? ”

“ *Certainly*,” she replied ; “ but I have since recollected that this word was uttered faintly, and that it seemed as if disjointed in pronouncing.”

“ Yes,”

“ Yes,” said I; “ I do from my soul believe my wife to be faultless.”

“ As any of her sex, I dare say,” retorted she, with an invidious smile; “ but, my good Count, we have all our failing, I assure you.”

“ Speak out, Madam—these insinuations stab deeper than the dagger of an assassins.”

“ I am no assassin, Sir. I respect you, I love the Countess; I am not angry with you, however—and I shall repeat it again, that if you run after women to find perfection, you will never overtake it.”

I caught hold of both her hands, and, with no gentle pressure, demanded the translation of an inuendo fraught with more signification than had met my understanding. “ Tell me,” said I, “ what it is you mean? Nothing you can say to me will be so painful as this trifling with my impatience.”

“ You force me then to break the silence I have so religiously preserved—you compel me
to

to act the detestable part of an informer, of an intermeddler, in affairs that do not concern me. . . . Well, Count, I shall certainly submit to these derogating offices rather than forfeit your friendship, or lose the opportunity by helping you in the search of certain calumniators, that, when found, we may together establish the innocence of my dear Countess, which, I must tell you, has long suffered in the eyes of the public some diminution."

I uttered a loud cry. "This is too much," I exclaimed. "They do not say my wife is unfaithful—she is in herself the very heaven of truth. . . . My wife *cannot* be unfaithful!"

The forcerefs pressed my hand, but was silent.

"Yes, you think me already injured, and this silence confirms the sentiment you would in compassion hide from me."—I suddenly threw myself down on a sofa, covered my face, and wept bitterly. We remained without speaking any more to each other several minutes, and, when I again lifted up my eyes, I saw that she had actually shared in
my

my sorrows, for her head was leaning on her hand, and her face was covered with tears—alas ! they were not the offspring of sympathy, but the children of hypocrisy tears fatal to my peace, because, fool that I was, I became a martyr to their fallacy, and gave up my credulity to a monster tears, for every one of which she then let fall my heart's best blood have since issued forth a thousand !

The treacherous seducer saw and enjoyed the triumph she had gained over me.—“ I see,” said she, “ that you have at last given me your confidence, and I will not abuse it—though the World condemns, Heaven may acquit. . . . They say your wife has injured you—yet it is *possible* she herself might be the very party most highly injured : let us wait patiently, my dear Count, for the development of this mystery, and do not, I entreat you, let your displeasure be perceived until you find the Countess fully condemned, or fully acquitted. If you do,” added she, shaking her head, “ you will have occasion to repent of your rashness.”

There was so much good sense in the council she gave me ; it was mingled with so much sweetness,

sweetness, so much compassion for me, so much consideration for my wife's repose, that, overpowered by her various arts, I promised, in my phrenzy, she alone should lead me in every thing. She was satisfied with my submission, accepted the office of my conductress, and said, " Now, that I had invested her with the reins, she would take care not to carry me through the road we had to pursue, by glimmering, feeble, or uncertain luminaries. . . . No—the full light of conviction should be our guide to that decision which involved the fate of the Countess and my own future felicity.

Jealousy is a passion, of all others, my child, the most despotic. It has the sole powers at once of changing an object infinitely adored to one of infinite detestation; and it was by the force of this tyrant despot that my heart closed upon the loveliest, kindest, best of her sex, and would open only to the artificial virtues of an abandoned hypocrite. I was certainly the most extravagant of mankind : she had cast her spells around me, and I suffered them to fetter me ; she had tied a bandage over my eyes, and I made

no

no effort to unlose it. This blindness occasioned me to reverse the characters of the two women, by whom my unsteady ideas were occupied. I stripped the Countess, in a moment, of those virtues I knew her to have once possessed, and my fancy threw them over the defective soul of Madam Vanker. I saw nothing but vice and deformity in the one; nothing but candour and generosity in the other.

“If,” said I, in my delirium, addressing myself to her who shone in the borrowed lustre in which my imagination had dressed her—“if, Madam, I were capable of being consoled for the perfidy I lament, the part you take in my misfortunes could alone console me. Yes, dear and amiable friend, I will be comforted: condescend then to comfort the most wretched of human beings! To your knees will I bring that heart which has received so cruel an outrage. Forgive my incoherency—the sacrifice I make you does not proceed from hatred to another, but from love to yourself. . . I now see all your charms—I am now sensible to all your merits. . . . they are no longer eclipsed by the image of my in-
grate

grate Countess they cease to be an outrage to those vows which she has broken, and Heaven's own sentence dissolves for ever."— I had run myself out of breath, and waited her answer with a heart devoured by concealed tortures, yet with an air of indifference to herself that ill agreed with the torrent of unfelt affection I had been endeavouring to describe.

Madam Vanker listened to and observed me as I spoke to her, with that sort of placid modesty which repels without seeming to intend it, and which nobody knew better how to counterfeit, when, by assuming it, she could promise to herself any advantage. She heard my wild sallies to an end, and then replied to them, perhaps, with insincerity almost equal to my own.

"Count," said she, "that I once entertained for you the most lively preference I am not about to deny; but I would now establish on your mind, that my predilection for you is entirely vanquished, so entirely, that I can witness without pain to the triumphs of your legitimate connection—but

I cannot with patience behold the Countess, to whom you have devoted a heart the most constant and noble; I shall not bear, I say, *if she should be guilty*, to see her tear it in pieces by her ingratitude. I feel with vehemence all the blackness of such a procedure, and the more inestimable I discover you to be, the more blameable is her caprice."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, forgetting to act the part of a lover, so lately adopted, so passionately began;—"ah, Madam! is it possible than, that you, you who are all goodness, can believe my wife is really the ingrate she has been represented.... Heavens and Earth! for her sake, what would I not have sacrificed!—But who is he that partakes her infamy?—Shew him to me—he who has seduced my wife shall be the object of my vengeance.... Name me this villain—name him to me instantly!"

"I know him not," replied she coolly.—
"They say he is a stranger, and but lately come hither."

"Perfidious!"

“Perfidious!” cried I, interrupting her; “and are you, indeed, so changed?... Where is now that soft modesty, thy sexes jewel?—where thy protestations of tenderness?—where thy vows of eternal love?—Are they all, all sunk in prostitution?”—I afterwards said something hastily and confused, to implore Madam Vanker would get what intelligence she could of the horrid circumstances, rushed out of her house, and entered my own with a heart plunged in despair. I shut myself up in my room several hours; the horrors of silence added to the horrors of my soul, and I returned to Madam Vanker, who I at last prevailed upon to satisfy all my doubts, and to engage that, with my own eyes, I should behold the consummation of my wife’s guilt; but she bade me wait her pleasure for a moment favourable to my disenchantment, for so she now called my attachment to the most abused and dearest of women: above all, the insidious destroyer of my repose loaded me with charges, that I should give no insight into my suspicions, otherwise it would put the Countess on her guard, and probably render abortive our wish, in favour of demonstration.

A man, whose mind is in the situation that mine was, whether at home or abroad, in company or in solitude, he will be alike restless; nothing will soften, nothing will divert the turbulence of his agitation. It was expedient that I should hide my distress from my wife—I attempted to do so—she saw through the thin disguise—with enchanting tenderness demanded to know my sorrows, and to share them with me. “Ah! how charming,” cried the Recluse, “did she appear at that moment, but the more amiable I thought her, the more unfortunate I believed myself, when I reflected that her heart was the property of another.”

Her voice was the voice of love, and her language the flow of wisdom: “My dearest husband,” she would say, “deprive me not of your confidence, I have not deserved that you should withdraw it; what is the cause of this fatal sorrow which secretly preys upon your heart? mine has no concealments from you; its thoughts are all open to him who is dearer to it than self is, to the most selfish of mortals; try, inspect, examine what you so entirely possess, look into its most hidden recesses,

recesses, and if you find there any thing besides your own dear image, then treat it unkindly, then continue your cruel reserve, then make a mystery of your distress."

Her audacity filled me with horror; her evident alarm surprised but did not touch me; my reply was cool and fullen; from which time I waited with agonising impatience to hail the day when Madam Vanker should send me word that all was ready for the Countess's unequivocal detection; I thought I should enjoy a furious sort of delight, when I could snatch the veil of deception from her soul, cast it in her face, and cover that face with blushes.

She, on the other hand, could not dive into the motive of my sudden change; she took pains to inform herself of every place I frequented, and at last learnt that I had lately held long and secret interviews with Madam Vanker. Suspense became certainly, and she no longer doubted that it was my criminal connection with this lady that had drawn away my affections from herself; the privacy of our *tête-à-têtes* confirmed every thing

and she became as miserable from my supposed perfidy, as I was by the knowledge of her dishonour. She sought for refuge in my generosity—she came to me, she said the most moving things in the world, capable of restoring peace to any breast less determined on its own destruction than mine was; these tenderesses were not unmixed with reproaches; I call them so, though they were gentle as mercy itself, yet neither one nor the other produced any sort of effect, except to turn my heart, which was before marble, into adamant.

We met seldom, spoke seldom, avoided the looks of each other with studied diligence; in short, we were most completely unhappy: the innocent victim of my rage, unable any longer to contain her grief, came one morning to my closet door, knocked, and I bade her enter; she appeared like a being of celestial order; the derangement of her hair, the purity of her robes, the paleness of her cheeks, the divine radiance of her eyes, united in forming the instantaneous idea; and as long as I remained fixed by the impression, I could have fallen at her feet, but the happy
delusion

delusion passed in a moment—it was an adultress who stood before me; and pointing to a chair, I only desired, with the most perfect indifference, that she would do me the honour to be seated. Her graceful body bent itself in an attitude of humility; her sweet face estranged itself from my gaze; her hands were clasped together; they were lifted up to that Supreme Power, from whom she seemed to expect greater mercy than from her inhuman husband. She did not reject my invitation; she took the place next to me, but took it in silence; there was an awful solemnity in her motions, that at any other time would have filled me with the sublimest respect: I now saw it only as a new exertion of her arts.

“I wait your pleasure,” Madam, “said I; “pray what are your commands with me?”

She lifted up her head, and her countenance was covered with tears; “I wish to speak,” said she, “but cannot. I have much to say to you, but tremble lest my
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fortitude

fortitude forsake me, and I faint in the expression."

"You are jesting with your own abilities," I replied, dryly; "nobody can doubt the Countess De 's powers in tragedy, whenever she pleases to exert them."

"Yet this is a great undertaking," said she, meekly; "I have no longer a tender lover, but I fear an inexorable judge, to whom I bring my appeal."

"Ungrateful woman!" I cried, inflamed with anger, "how dare you accuse me of injustice; know that I am neither cruel nor unjust, and if I cease to be your lover, it is for a cause not in my power to prevent: do you understand me now?"

"Too well indeed I understand you," said she, her voice gaining firmness as she spoke. "Alas! what I predicted before our unfortunate union is realized; a passion so ardent as your's made me tremble for its duration; to satisfy you I sacrificed scruples that experience has taught me I ought to have preserved

served inviolate. You love me no longer—another possesses that heart which is due only to myself—I bought it with my own—I gave also my hand to a man who abandons me to the torture of seeing him bestow his affections on my rival.”

I was about to interrupt her by reproaches full of severity, but she stopped me.

“ Give me your patience a little longer,” said she, “ and before we part I shall reward, richly reward the sacrifice you make me, for know, whatever it may cost me, I shall give up to this favoured rival a husband so beloved, that, in resigning my claim to his protection, I shall sign to the destruction of my happiness, and my life.—Yet it shall be done. If you consent, I shall separate myself from you for ever, entomb myself in a nunnery, and groan out the useless lamentations which cannot offend you, because you will be far removed from them.”

“ Would you ask me,” I cried, “ to give you back that heart which you have forfeited?”

“ No!

“No!” she replied; “it would be the request of an idiot—a heart once lost is never to be regained; yet I confess I should feel my sorrows alleviated, if I should be told in my separation from you that my estrangement afflicted you; at least, that it occasioned some little portion of remorse.”

Her magnanimity, which had been increasing from the moment she first began to speak upon the subject of her wrongs, was at this period arrived to such refulgent dignity, that her very doubts conveyed to me a sentiment of inferiority, and I felt myself degraded by comparison; I even forgot that I had any thing to alledge against her conduct. I seized her hand, and cried out, in a tone of rapture—“By all the host of Heaven I adore you!” then dropped her hand, and felt ashamed of my weakness,

She neither seemed elated nor displeased at this act of insanity; I can call it by no better epithet, as it was succeeded by a gloom, which nothing afterwards would penetrate. She received it with a smile of incredulity, in which despair was plentifully mingled.

“You

“ You deceive yourself,” said she, “ my dear Count; there is nothing more foreign from your heart than the adoration with which you would flatter me—you still love, but the object of your love is not that wife who you cast from you, and for whom, perhaps, you are sensible of some respect; but that cold sentiment will combat faintly in my favour, opposed to the ardours of your new attachment. Oh! (added she, passionately). would to God you *could*, you *would* restore me to that blissful pre-eminence from which the bitterness of my fate has hurled me. It is you—you who tore the bands asunder that united our destinies: it is you that crush by indifference the enchantments of a mutual passion.”

I would have retorted the accusation with which she charged me, only substituting the word *adultery* for that of *indifference*, but I checked the inclination I felt to retaliate; Madam Vanker’s advice started to my recollection, and I remained sullenly silent: her attacks on a soul vibrating from one extreme to another were so furious, so powerful, that there seemed to be no stability in my thoughts,
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my words, or my actions: I was made up of contrarieties, now tender, now fierce, now ready to fall at her feet, and now to abandon her to infamy.

“Hear me, hear me,” said the fascinating pleader, and dropped on her knees before me, “dearest Count, most beloved of husbands: it is not for my sake, but your own, that I become the humblest of your supplicants: cast away the delicious poison by which you are intoxicated; annul the criminal alliance that makes my misery, and will as surely add no glory to your hitherto-immaculate honour; break with Madam Vanker, and oh!—if it be possible, pay me back those affections, dearer to me than my existence.”

I answered only by deep sighs; a weight pressed upon my heart, that I am not able to describe. I offered my hand to raise her, but could not articulate a syllable.

“I must not then hope to touch you,” she cried; “I see the confirmation of all my misfortunes—I see the remorse that agitates you—
I see

I see your struggles for liberty—I see by the changes in your countenance your abhorrence of vice: but alas! every thing tells me that you will not be able to conquer the guilty inclination that enslaves you—my complaints for a moment fill you with sorrow—compare those feelings of your own with those that will kill me, when I am separated from you.”

“If you think as you speak, Madam, why then do you talk of leaving me?”

“Can you ask me,” she replied, in a flood of tears: “ah! this constraint, this coldness assures me, that my importunities—my presence trouble you. I go then, never to return. I would live but for you, and to make you happy. I will entomb, together with my wrongs, a form that no longer pleases you: for your sake I will do even more—and from this moment resign my right, not only to your heart, but your hand. Divorce me—yes! divorce me—and let another bear that name, ever precious to my memory! let Madam Vanker be your wife—and oh! if
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it be possible, may she constitute your happiness as I would have done."

Sentiments so tender, so generous, so noble, could not, I thought, escape but from the soul of sincerity. I have told you, child, that my thoughts were eternally shifting: and again her expression concerning Madam Vanker turned them from a point to which they first inclined. I considered it as the machination of refined cunning, to make my foibles the excuse for her own vices. Ah! why, why was it that my infernal spirit could not distinguish the accents of truth springing from the heart of virtue?

The interview between us now drew towards a conclusion; it had begun in gloom, proceeded in tears, and it ended in agony. The Countess arose to withdraw—my heart was bursting, yet I made no effort to detain her. She cast her white arms round me; "This," said she, "is a last embrace. Adieu! dearest of men, adieu!—a last adieu! though I die in pronouncing it." With these words she fled from me; however, she did not go to the nunnery as she had menaced,

naced, and this confirmed me in the fatal opinion, that her whole conduct, from the commencement of our acquaintance, had been a tissue of fine-woven deception. Madam Vanker had promised to write to me, and inform me more exactly of what I wanted to know: this intelligence I waited for—torn by fear and impatience, at last it arrived, and these were the contents of her billet:

BILLET.

“ Since you will be instructed in your misfortunes, learn to bear them with manly strength: I intreat this of you in the name of that friendship I owe you; the *eclaircissement* you demand is now in our power. Absent yourself from home two days, return on the third night; come to me, and you shall be convinced: hide well the steps you are going to take, that all the world may be ignorant of your suspicions.

“ VANKER.”

After reading this letter I no longer wavered between two opinions; Madam Vanker must be able to give me ocular demonstration of
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the Countess's infidelity, or she would not have made the appointment. A something in my wife's favour had at intervals lurked about my mind—it was totally eradicated by this venomous billet, which, like the poisoned shirt of Hercules, became my destruction; the immediate effect it produced was extraordinary, for it threw me into a paroxysm of madness—I raved as if this had been the first apprisesment of my condition, and I gave to every word of Madam Vanker the most implicit belief.

I prepared for my departure the following day, having informed the Countess that I was going to a small estate we had twelve leagues from Anvers, where I intended to remain—I did not know how long. I made this communication with an air so embarrassed, that her gentle, unresting spirit caught the alarm, and she cried out, “You go then, because I have not already left you as I had promised—alas! it was the force of love alone that hindered me from executing your wishes. Oh! that the same motive would keep you here—but go, and at your return you will have no wife.”

“You

“ You also, perhaps,” retorted I, “ may then have no husband.” I did not stay to hear what she would answer, but, taking leave of all my happiness at once, I rashly quitted her.

Instead of going to my estate, as I had signified to the Countess, I shut myself up in a house, some small distance from the town, where I could have the horrible advantage of hearing from Madam Vanker, and here it was I received her second letter. “ I have much repugnance,” wrote she, “ to keep my word with you. I shall render your wife unfortunate; and your happiness, I *know*, depends on her, though you *think* the contrary. Indeed, Count, I am very sorry I ever opened your eyes, but you would absolutely have it so.—No! I was wrong, and I heartily repent of my folly: I should have let you cherish the error you laboured under. I should repent even with greater severity than I do, if there had not been proofs of the Countess’s culpability: however, you are not obliged to hunt after these proofs—drop the pursuit then, and, if you *can*, believe her innocent—Ah! how much rather would I persuade you

of her purity, than open your eyes to the black discovery. Chuse which you please, and command me; but on condition only, that, if you insist on being the witness of your own wrongs, you promise me, on the faith of a gentleman, and a Christian, that the sight of them shall not transport you to act any sort of rashness on the Countess; and that however hereafter your vengeance may pursue her paramour, you will not chastise, or even lift your hand against him at the moment of their detection. I am a woman! have all a woman's fears about me, and on no other terms in the world will I consent to make you *certainly* miserable, if that should be your choice, rather than continue as you are, *doubtfully* happy: consider well what I say to you, and answer me immediately."

This was my reply—"I pledge to you, Madam, the word of a Christian, and man of honour, that from my resentment to my wife you have nothing to apprehend; if she is culpable, I shall leave her punishment to Heaven—time—and her own remorse of conscience: all that she has to expect from me is banishment from my house, from my heart,

heart, and from my memory. Your commands that I should spare the villain who seduces her are of a much harder nature; yet my election for *certain* misery is made, and I submit even to them; this arm shall not be lifted against him, since it is you who hold it down. Understand me, Madam, it is only in the presence of her who will then be no longer my wife, that I consider myself bound to observe the limits you prescribe me; afterwards I have a faithful sword, that shall not leave my side till it has avenged its master: and now, Madam, I call upon you to finish what you have begun—prolong not my tortures, or you infallibly shorten my existence.”

Madam Vanker accorded to my intreaties, and the same night she summoned me to her presence. “I am charmed with you,” said she; “you are fit to be trusted with your own fate—you possess both spirit and coldness—there is pleasure in serving you, even in your own way, be it ever so repugnant to one’s own feelings.—Yes; I do feel for the poor Countess—but a thousand times more

do I smart for the disgrace she has brought upon you."

There is something so contemptible in that sort of pity, which holds up a mirror to display the vexations one wishes to hide; the word disgrace too was announced in a tone so impressive, that I felt myself exceedingly hurt by her infernal graciousness, and should certainly have quarrelled with her, only as she had undertaken my ruin, and the work was not yet quite finished, my ill-fated stars would let me throw no obstacle in the way of its completion; I therefore satisfied myself with requesting that I might be brought to my trial as soon as possible.

"Your impatience is extremely natural," said she, "and I promise you we will have no unnecessary delays, but the time is yet distant; there are many things to be done; I have already had a great deal of trouble, and it is not yet ended. I go to smooth the path before you—wait where you are for my return—afterwards you shall know how I have managed every thing for your future security, and I hope for your future repose also."

also. Adieu, Count," added she, " I labour for you incessantly ; keep up your spirits, and expect me back in three hours."

The most troublesome companions an unfortunate or guilty man can be left to, is his own thoughts. I knew myself to be of the former, but was then ignorant that I came under the description of the latter ; yet, had I been as well informed of my crimes as I was of my misfortunes, my conflicts, in the absence of Madame Vanker, could not have been greater. The purgatory of our faith holds out no torments half so exquisite as those under which I sustained life from the moment she left me alone to that of her return, which was precisely at the time she had fixed. Her presence rescued me from a state so frightful only to plunge me into one infinitely more horrible. I was delivered over into the hands of a man who followed her, and by him conducted with secrecy through many round-about ways, which made our walk a long one, to the back of my house. He produced a key, opened the door, and we entered together. Madame Vanker told me, in a whisper, as I was going from her, that

she had secured the Countess's *Femme de Chambre* in our interest, and I found her waiting to receive me. She conducted me to a cabinet adjoining my wife's apartment, to which I had myself a key; and it was before agreed that I should be attended by witnesses, to establish the fact whenever I might think proper to sue for a divorce. These witnesses were to be the man whom Madam Vanker had given me, and my wife's woman; attended by these two people I entered the room, and they approached with me to the bed. Though there were many lights in the chamber, I thought there had been none, for my eyes refused to acknowledge them, my head grew giddy, and I should have sunk down upon the floor, if the wretches who stood near had not supported me. But, Great God! when I was capable of distinguishing objects, what a spectacle presented itself to my view! though in part prepared for its reception, like death it came with a shock not to be resisted. . . it was the Countess in a profound sleep, and a man by her side, whose clothes lay scattered about the room in many places. The cry which my grief raised awakened my wife, and her attention fixed upon
upon

upon me; it next turned on the person in the bed, and her agony was greater than my own: with a look of distraction, the impression of which is never to be obliterated from my too-faithful memory, she uttered a scream that penetrated my soul with compassion and horror; struck as I was, I flew to succour her; something, I know not what it was, spoke from the bottom of my heart in her favour. The supposed minion of her pleasures, in this scene of confusion, made his escape. The Countess recovered from a long faint; her eyes were opened with inexpressible wildness, and seemed equally to shun herself and me; her lovely fingers were entangled in those glossy ringlets that had so often excited my admiration; she tore them up by the roots, and flung them round her in all the phrenzy of despair; wept, sobbed, groaned, but made no effort to articulate, except “Undone! Undone!” which word she repeated without ceasing.—Watching the approach of an instant more calm, or rather less turbulent, I said to her, “Madam, the stratagem to which you have recourse will be useless—your crimes are established to your confusion and my dishonour. . . . This is our last meet-

ing—I bid you eternally farewell ;” saying which, with an air of desperation, I fled from the apartment, and some time after returned to Madam Vanker.

“ You see before you,” said I, “ a man who has nothing to do with life—one who is sinking under the weight of his sorrows, and whose hope is, that Death will put an end to his complicated misery ! ”——I afterwards repeated to her, with broken and interrupted pathos, the horrible transactions that had passed before my aching sight. During the dreadful detail, a chalky paleness overspread her countenance ; she sometimes covered her face with her hands, sometimes laid them on her heart ; she tried to speak, but her utterance was stopped by ungovernable emotion : yet, after many attempts to articulate, she brought out these few words, “ Oh ! the Countess ! the Countess ! It is not for you, it is for the Countess that I feel ! ”—Had I been in possession of my senses, these strong expressions of regret might have surprised, perhaps led me to make some inquiries ; but though I saw and heard every thing, I could distinguish nothing :

thing : outrageous myself, I was not to be affected by the distraction of another. My interview with Madam Vanker was a short one. I returned to my house in the country which I had so lately quitted, and from thence dispatched this note to the Countess,

NOTE.

“ I command you to tell me who it is that has been the destroyer of my peace, that I may pursue him with my vengeance. As to yourself, I pardon the injuries you have done me in consideration of the love I once bore you. Dear, unhappy creature ! he who has been thy adoring husband, now thy judge, softens with mercy towards thee, sends thee his pardon, and prays for thy reformation—hide thyself from my sight—bury thy disgrace for ever in retirement—weep, repent, and be forgiven.

“ LE COMPTE DE ****.”

The receipt of this letter brought her to the gates of death, and the only thing of which

which she was capable *that* she performed; she ordered that a messenger should be sent express to me with only one single line, and that written so ill, it was with difficulty I could decypher it.—“Come,” she wrote, “come, for the love of God, and receive my justification!”—*That*, in my opinion, it was impossible she should be able to make out; and, besides, afraid to trust in the weakness of my own heart, I determined to see her no more, and became like one of those who refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, *charmer* they ever so wisely.

My barbarity extended no further than silently rejecting her solemn injunctions. Every day I sent privately to learn the condition of her health, and every day the sad accounts, returned to my inquiries, were darker complectioned than the former; at last I was gratified by a letter written with her own hand—terrible gratification! I carry it always about me—it feeds my grief, and affords a gloomy pleasure, whenever I contemplate the contents.—He took it from his bosom, and, between his sighs, which were deep and bitter, read it to me.

LETTER,

LETTER.

“I write to you in the arms of Death; hard and cold is his pressure—yet not so cold, so hard, as your cruelty. You ask me to give up the author of my disgrace to your vengeance—I acknowledge no disgrace; I can therefore give up no author of it. . . . Whatever was the phantom your eyes met, its situation so near my person, gave you too much cause for casting me from you.—I called you cruel, but I revoke the appellation; you have not meant to be cruel, you only intended to be just. . . . That God, in whose presence I shall shortly appear—it is him that I call upon to witness, that the heart, you think estranged from you, has never known any other master than yourself, and that the person you conceived to be polluted would have severed, with her own hand, the thread of her existence, rather than have suffered the contaminating touch of vice. I have been rendered culpable by appearances, for which I am in no manner able to account—time only

only can develop my innocence—to that I leave it. . . . Yet, oh! my deceived, my inexorable, ever-beloved husband!—oh! may the veil which now blinds you never be removed; on the contrary, I would rather you should continue to think that all you have seen is real, that I am guilty, and that you were not the dupe of imposition. I am satisfied in the idea, that, when I am no more, you will sometimes think of me with regret, and that regret I would not convert into torture. May you ever, dearest Count, be as happy as I am unmeritedly miserable.

“THE COMTESSE DE ****.”

This charming letter being ended, the Recluse dashed from his inflamed eyes one of those solitary drops which had lingered behind its companions, that from the beginning had strayed down his venerable cheeks; he pressed it to his lips, returned it to his bosom, and continued his narrative, the repetition of which had taken up several days, though I have thought proper to carry it on in one chain, without giving myself the labour, which some writers take as a pleasure,
to

to disjoint the links, merely to make work in putting them together again.

The solemn appeal made by the Countess (said he) to the Creator of all men and Inspector of all hearts, if it did not produce immediate and absolute conviction, yet it so much softened my resolves, that I turned my thoughts towards home, and I felt a degree of impatience to see, once more, her who had taught me to feel the most exquisite transports—she for whom I now experienced the most intolerable despair. I took no pains to combat these new inclinations, and should have sat out immediately, but, at the instant, received a message from Madam Vanker, that I must come to her without losing a moment. Her commands were peremptory, and I felt myself forced to obey them.

I was shewn into her bedchamber, but did not observe that the servant who conducted me turned the key on the outside as soon as I had entered: this I found afterwards was done by order of Madam Vanker, who feared that I should leave her before she
had

had given me my leave of audience—and she judged right, as you will soon understand.

She beckoned me to her bed side, and in silence pointed for me to occupy a chair as close to her as it could be drawn; but I did not directly profit by her invitation. I stood gazing on her as I should have done on a phenomenon; there was a distraction in her countenance never equalled, except by that which seized on my adored wife in the moment of her supposed detection, with this difference, if I could have distinguished it, that innocence must have shed her illuminations around the Countess, whilst the terrors of conscience deformed the features of Madam Vanker. No sooner had I spoken, and asked the cause of her indisposition, than she recovered her speech, together with the powers of action; she threw her hands wildly about, started from her pillow, and exclaimed, “ Kill me, Count! Kill me!—for I will not exist under these tortures! ”

“ What are these tortures of which you complain, Madam? ”

“ Oh!

“ Oh! sit down,” replied she, “ and I will explain them to you ; but do not look on me so piercingly !—O Earth! open and swallow me up! Count, I charge you, withdraw your eyes from me !—Am I a monster?—do you see monster written on my forehead, that you dare thus to inspect me ?—Do you read there that your wife is innocent, and that I only am guilty ?”

“ Great God !” I cried, “ are you distracted? My wife innocent, did you say ?—speak, and, in mercy, repeat that my wife is innocent !”

“ As Angels !” said she, “ as Angels that surround the Throne of Heaven, and I blacker than infernal furies !”

A scream of joy broke from my lips. . . .
 “ My wife,” cried I, “ still lives, and is innocent !”——I ran towards the door, and would have felled that man to the earth who had ventured to stop my flight. I tried the door, and it was now that I found it had been locked on the outside; I endeavoured to force it open, but my strength failed, and,
 going

going back to the bed, I threatened Madam Vanker with instant death, if she did not open a passage for me, that I might go and throw myself at the feet of the Countess."

"Know, Count," said she, "I court the blow you threaten. . . . The life you would take is my curse—relieve me from it, and I will bless you."

"Wretch!" I replied, "are you willing to exchange transient for everlasting torments?"

"Most ready, am I," she returned, "to exchange certain for uncertain inflictions!"

"Live then," cried I, "since life will be thy greater torment; but expect not that I will, for an instant, forego my blissful hopes, to feast my senses on thy writhings of remorse. . . . Command that the door be opened, or, by the Great God of Heaven!"

----- She interrupted me-----

"Hear me, for your own sake, now that I have recovered composure enough to address you. Would you go to your wife on the
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the word of an abandoned like me?—would you take her to your bosom on the faith of her who has forfeited all claim to truth?—is it on so feeble an evidence that you are in such haste to discredit the stronger ones of your own senses? . . . I foresaw this resistance in your inflammable nature, and guarded against its consequences ; but now go, if you can, be content with the very slender, almost casual, hints I have let fall of her innocence : go—and, if your doubts should hereafter return, curse yourself, but spare me who would have rooted them from the foundation, if you had permitted me to do so.”—She rang the bell three times ; it was a signal for unlocking the door ; it still remained shut, and no one entered. “ You are no longer my prisoner,” added Madam Vanker ; “ it remains in your option to leave me half cured of your suspicions, or, by staying ten minutes longer, discharge them on established reasons for ever.”

I felt the whole force of her argument, and made my choice of the latter ; but warned her to be as brief as was consistent with the circumstances she had to relate.

“ Brief it shall be,” said she. “ The few moments that may remain to me of life must be employed in repentance ; and it is only your forgiveness that will enable me to ask it of the Almighty.”

“ The price of it from me,” cried I, “ must be your coming to the point immediately.”

“ I agree,” she returned, “ to the condition. Too well you know already the first shameful cause of my hatred for your wife, which was afterwards augmented by the shadow thrown on my reputation, through her treating my passion for you with the rigour it deserved ; in this last disgrace I could not but consider you in the light of her accomplice, and you divided my resentment with her. From this time the phrenzy of love was turned to the madness of revenge. To accomplish my diabolical purpose required all the arts of address, insinuation, and duplicity, of which I was mistress, and I called them all into action : I gained not only the Countess’s good opinion, but your confidence ; and on these foundations I raised the superstructure of your subsequent misery. It was I who first
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tinged your soul with jealousy—it was I who dictated those very letters which increased it—and it was I who filled your ears with reports to the dishonour of a character, the purity of which disgusted me. . . . You would have proofs of your misfortune, and every thing unfortunately conspired to assist my vengeance. I sent you into the country, and used the moments of your absence in seducing the Countess's Femme de Chambre, and in laying plans with her for the execution of my project; when every thing was contrived I recalled you—you came, and I went out to consult, for the last time, the confidante who I had made the agent of my crimes at a very large expence. She informed me that her lady had watched and wept your absence for three successive nights, and that, in conformity to my directions, she had persuaded her to take something composing, when she next lay down, to steady her nerves and procure sleep. I approved of all she had done: yet to such a height of wickedness was I arrived, that I loaded her with charges to administer but a small dose, the effects of which would not last long, because I felt my revenge would be incomplete

if she should happen not to wake whilst you was in her apartment."

"O God!" cried I, "and hast thou permitted-----."

"Hold," said she, interrupting me, "I am now making my confession—you limit me to time, and you annex the reward of your forgiveness to my conciseness; yet it is you who throw obstacles in the way of my obtaining it-----." I was silent, and she proceeded.—"Call to your remembrance the rigour with which I exacted from you a sacred engagement, that you would not raise your arm against this supposed rival in the presence of your wife."—"My life was then what it is not now—it was dear to me, so dear, that rather than have risked it against your fury, I should certainly have renounced the whole treacherous combination."—"Speak not—it is impossible you should yet comprehend me—I see you are ready with your observations; they will answer no purpose but to prolong an interview that is painful to you.... The man, who conducted you to your own house, had my orders to convey
you

you thither through ways so intricate, that by the common path I got there myself fifteen minutes before you. I sometimes wondered why you had not questioned me on my motive for directing you so much out of the road; but as I had given an air of profound mystery to the whole business, you considered this as a necessary move, and politeness would not permit you to penetrate further into the explanation of my conduct than I thought it convenient to reveal. When I got to your house, I made haste to dress myself as a man by the help of a beard*, and afterwards took my place in the bed by the side of the Countess, who was sleeping sweetly, and it was only your cries that awakened her. Now it is, Count, that you see my crimes displayed before you without either disguise or mystery: the curtain falls which has hitherto obscured from your sight my true character; I am only now to account for that change in my sentiments which must have astonished you, and it is fit you should know that it is to yourself I am indebted; and the confession I make may,

* At this period beards were yet fashionable in Flanders,

I trust, relieve me from some part of my burden. . . . Yes, Count, my fears that you would discover that it was I who usurped your place by the side of Madam de ****, gave the first blow to my courage; *that* beginning to fail, cowardice took possession of the vacant part of my soul, and let in repentance with a long train of horrors : these are the enemies which reduce me to my present situation—it is *their* cries by which I am forced to declare the wrongs I have done you. . . . Go now, Sir, to the Countess—render again to her those affections her innocence so well deserves. Obtain for me, if you can, the pardon of my crimes, and excuse me to your own heart.”——She ceased to speak, and concealed her head beneath the bed clothes : for my part, my transports of fury against this forcerefs were so much mingled with joy, that she had restored the treasure of my soul with its value undiminished, that, without staying to indulge the former, I hastened to secure the latter, and ran with such speed towards my own house that every body I passed by seemed to regard me as a lunatic.

Ah !

Ah! with what indescribable sensations did I take the knocker in my hand; I made it speak my impatience; but my love, my self reproaches, my repentance, it could not speak the loudness of my demand, for entrance was instantly answered. I did not look in the face, or ask a question of the domestic who opened the door, but as I rushed by him to go to his lady's apartment I fancied I heard him calling after me to stop, and even that somebody touched my coat, as if to detain me; the time was too precious to be cast away in anger or explanations—I entered her chamber—I flew to her bed, threw open the curtain, kneeled by her side, and, without daring to look upon the injured angel, I seized on one of her lovely hands that lay extended on the quilt, hid my face upon it, and covered it with my tears! The total inaction with which she received the tender tokens of my penitence awakened me to reflection, and then it was that I first perceived the stiff joints and icy coldness of the hand I embraced. I began to suspect every thing: my hair stood erect—I started on my feet, and saw—O God! not the sweet, animated

countenance of my adorable wife, but a corpse disfigured by the *traits* of death.

Ah! reader, guess if you can what must have been the conflicts of our venerable Recluse, when he arrived at this period of his deplorable history; he was no more the sage philosopher I had been used to see him, but a man, the movements of whose soul transported him to savage fierceness.: all the passions in their turn passed over his distorted features; his voice forsook him—his eyes glared—the blood now rushed to his cheeks, and now with equal velocity returned to his heart: he at last uttered a cry of distress, and ran from me. All that day, and for several more, I saw him but seldom; he evidently wished to shun me, though I pursued him every where with a heart as heavy as his own. A week had passed in this manner, and for the greatest part of it he buried himself in the deepest recesses of our forest: this was my first acquaintance with sorrow, and this the first time I had ever dragged after me the intolerable weight of lassitude.

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By the same degrees as he recovered his composure my vivacity returned; on the eighth morning after our abrupt separation he said to me, with his usual serenity, "My dear daughter, I have banished myself so long from the comforts of thy society, as a penance due to my want of submission to the will of Heaven. I gave way to passions offensive to the nature of that God who directs us, and it has been in solitude that I sought to correct them: my efforts have not been in vain; I am again master of myself, and now I have strength to conclude that part of my disastrous life which yet remains unfinished."

"Not *now*, my father," I cried; "not *now*, my dear father! I dreaded to see him relapse into his disorder, and my whole frame suffered universal agitation."

He pressed me to his heart, bid me fear nothing on his account; he had fully conquered his weakness, and proceeded in this manner——

I do not exactly know what became of me for many weeks after that excruciating scene
which

which affected me so much in the relation, but I remember the first use I made of God's goodness in restoring me to the use of my reason, was to order a mausoleum should be erected, where I saw deposited the remains of my unfortunate Countess, which had before been privately interred on account of my still *more* unfortunate state of health, as an eternal monument of her high virtues, my own everlasting shame, and my just repentance. I caused to be engraved on the sable marble the whole astonishing catastrophe. Thus much performed of my duty, my wounds too green to soften, too deep to cure, I locked myself from the intrusion of the happy, who would have forced their presence upon me, and enjoyed with enthusiasm the dangerous luxury of gloomy retrospection: in vain for me did the sun rise in glory, and set in splendour, I would not admit its cheerful rays to penetrate the preferable darkness in which my woes were enveloped: I constantly held, in my hands a portrait of my Countess; the likeness was strong, but not so strong as that dear image which love had with his own masterly pencil imprinted on my heart: I refused all nourishment, except just as much
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as might barely prolong my existence. I wished not to deface the works of my Creator, but I ardently prayed for a re-union of souls with her whose death I had occasioned, and waited with impatience for the thrice-happy moment. In the mean time Madam Vanker's malady increased; she sent to offer me all her possessions—I refused them with disdain, but my mind, softened by affliction, could not resist to grant her that pardon which she solicited in this energetic sentence—"I write on the bed of death; your forgiveness seals my redemption, or your curse must hurl me to perdition." However, I heard afterwards that she recovered from her illness, and had shut herself up in a nunnery.

"Are there many such women as this Madam Vanker in the world?" I asked.

"Too many, I fear, my child," replied the Recluse; "and from the example of my wife's sufferings you may learn this short lesson, that excelling beauty, joined to virtue and innocence, may sometimes find protection in our sex, but never from their own."

"I wish

“ I wish then I had not been what you call a woman,” said I; “ but, dear father, pray go on with your history now, that you can do so without dying of grief.”

“ Alas !” he replied, “ it is only the history of my heart that I have now to relate : what might properly be called my life ended with the existence of Madam de * * * *. All the inhabitants of Anvers were alarmed at my total exclusion, and at last some of them, with whom I had been in habits of intimacy, stole upon my retirement ; they were shocked at the situation in which they found me, and did all they could to drag me from my funeral retreat. What ! (said I, to those friendly tormenters) do you expect that I will ever again return to the joys of society ? I who have murdered all social enjoyments, would you expose, happy husbands, and amiable wives, to one whose eyes would be blasted by the sight ? Do you want me to look upon the light of day, which my soul abhors ? would you have me forget that I have been the destroyer of innocence ? or do you suppose I am so hardened as to lift up my eyes upon the world, to talk, run, and ride as they

they do, yet carry my guilt about me. Ah! rather leave me to my fate, or join your prayers with mine, that an honourable death may soon terminate an inconsolable life.— Such were the arguments with which I combated the troublesome importunities of my friendly persecutors; they saw it was in vain to contend with a man so determined, and retired themselves from making any further efforts.

When left to my own disposal I sold every thing that I had remaining, and went to France, where I took a part with Henry the Eleventh against the Duc de Mayenne; and, being in pursuit of death, I searched for him in the most perilous actions, but found him not: on the contrary, whilst looking for immortal, I was acquiring mortal glory: this did not answer my purpose, and the compliments I received for my valour did not console me for my disappointment.

Henry le Grand next opposed the arms of the Duc de Parma; I still kept in the French service, and during the rest of the war was witness of those battles which decided the

the religion and the crown of Henry without reaping the advantage of laying down my life, or for one moment banishing from my thoughts the horrible idea of my wife in that attitude when, for the last time, I beheld her precious remains; this picture for ever haunted my imagination; I of course became more and more averse to mix with my brother officers; even upon duty was constantly buried in gloom; often absent, and sometimes I fear uncivil; whoever will not be at the pains to please, are sure to be displeasing; this was exactly my case, and I found myself alone in the midst of numbers, some of whom at first kindly strove to correct the moroseness of what they supposed to be my natural disposition; but, like my acquaintance at Anvers, failing in the attempt, they gradually forsook me: this sort of neglect was far from giving me uneasiness, but shewed me that I was altogether unfit for holding any manner of intercourse with mankind, and made me form a resolution of quitting the world. My choice fell on this vast sombre forest of Ardennes, as the most eligible spot on the habitable globe for the execution of my new plan. Here I found that impenetrable solitude

tude after which I now eagerly panted, and here I began to recover my tranquillity: the part I fixed upon for my habitation seemed to have been undiscovered by all the rest of the world; there was not the smallest vestige by which it could be traced that the foot of man had ever profaned its sacred shades, and the beautiful songsters that salute your ears at the early dawn of morning were my only companions.

I formed, as you see, on this side my humble hut, and with constant labour soon converted a piece of ground into a garden agreeable enough; I had provided myself with all sorts of seeds for use and ornament; for though no flowers would spring up in my mind, from the bosom of the earth no noxious vapours exhaled—the soil was friendly, they raised their verdant heads—flourished, and rewarded my pains, by shedding their sweets around me: but this wood on the right was the first object that took hold on my affections, and will ever keep the preference it obtained: its melancholy shades, almost impervious to the light of Heaven, gives it a sort of relative claim to my heart, when clothed in green;
it

it reminds me of those hours I passed with the Countess, when I see them lose their verdure, and shed their honours on the ground; it speaks to me of short-lived joys, and shews me to myself stripped of all my happiness. "Do not grieve, my child," for tears rushed to my eyes, and he saw them; "do not grieve, my darling daughter, my situation is not deplorable—forty years I have been established in this forest—a part of my life, if not the most teeming with felicity, neither the most fraught with afflictions. My wife ever is, ever will be present with me; but my griefs are mellowed by adoring the power of Him who snatched her from me. To occupy my mind I have bestowed much application on the attainment of knowledge without the aid of books, and without any other master than nature's self: in my exile from mankind I have penetrated into many of her hidden mysteries: liberated from the dangerous society of the world—from the false principles it instils—from the sophistry by which our duties are made to put on harsh, unpleasant aspects, and our most corrupt vices, to take upon them the form of loveliness, removed from the fogs that error
throws

throws around her; I cultivated the science of existence, and by my researches acquired the most difficult of all lessons, how to estimate, after their true value, what is good and what is evil."

The words of my venerable guardian sunk deep into my heart—his misfortunes, and those of his wife, robbed me of my vivacity; it gave place to thoughtfulness, if not to sadness; but most of all which rivetted my attention was, that surprising force of the passions which I had once seen so strongly marked on the countenance of the noble Recluse—his discourse too expressed them with violence. I wondered at their effects, but could in no manner account by what error in our natures such effects were produced: how could I then understand it? a novice myself in those feelings from which they spring, and by which they are nurtured; the result of my enquiries was this, that I fervently prayed no fatal necessity might ever plunge me into the society of men and women, amongst whom one's life is exposed to so many accidents—so many reverses. I only desired to live in the same solitude in which I had hitherto been

immured: but, alas! I did not consider how different that solitude would appear, when fate should cut off the existence of *one* solitary companion, an existence which by long and severe usage seemed already to suspend on a single thread; but I did not perceive the feebleness of this cobweb support—I will fully shut my eyes to the infirmities of age, daily creeping upon him, because these symptoms were adverse to my affection, my gratitude, and my peace. This good man, who knew all the movements of my soul, considered me as wrapped up in a veil of self-woven artificial serenity; he had compassion for me, when the blow should fall upon me, and endeavoured by the gentlest, yet strongest reasoning to avert its alighting on me with a crush of surprise, which might shatter me to atoms: he therefore every day, by little and little, strove to prepare me for the reception of a misfortune, that, however slow it may approach, was nevertheless inevitable.

To these charming conversations I am indebted for all *true* knowledge—this knowledge, compared with what is so called in the world,

world; and which I afterwards mechanically acquired, may be distinguished from each other by the appellations of *useful* and *essential*—I know not else how to define the great difference between them. In one of these our confidential *tête-à-têtes* my dear Mentor spoke to me after this manner :

“ My child,” said he, “ in quitting the world; I brought with me to this retreat many precious gems, in addition to which I have since accumulated more that hereafter I shall shew to you, and explain by what accident they fell into my possession : these are all entombed in the earth, and of so great a price, that you will at some future period find yourself a considerable fortune; but beware that you do not abuse it. Nothing is of so much estimation in the world as riches, and nothing is in reality so dangerous, so little estimable. True riches consist in a state free from dependance, with a sufficiency to supply us in the necessaries and comforts of life; abundance and luxury are not to be coveted by the wise; it is only fools that will pursue them, because they are productive of real misery, by multiplying our wants, and rendering our desires

for ever insatiable, for ever dissatisfied: the counsel I give you is salutary; I know you will ingraft it on your memory; and I desire, when the time comes that you are the happy mother of children, you will steal upon their minds the precepts I have taught you."

"Alas! my father!" I cried, "how is it that you talk to me of being a mother! do you think I shall ever tear myself from you? do you think I will ever leave this forest?"

"How soon have you forgotten," said he, "what I have so often repeated to you, that the wisdom of Providence has ordained that we must separate; you will not leave me, but I shall be taken from you; the coldness of age has already iced my blood—death approaches by visible gradations, and I believe it will quickly ravish from me all earthly objects; even thou, my daughter, cannot go down with me into the grave."

I interrupted him with sobs and tears—
"How can you—ah! how can you talk thus—would you speak, would you look so calmly,

calmly, if this terrible death was indeed so near, so very near as you say it is."

He looked on me with ineffable softness, that mellowed the dignity of his aspect. He sometimes called me his blossom of the forest, and now applied to me that endearing name with more than his accustomed fondness.—

"Sweet blossom of the forest," he said, "brush away from thy glowing cheeks those dew drops, which fear, pity, and filial love has exhaled from a heart, tender as it is innocent. If immortality on earth had ever yet been the lot of any created being, then might Rosalie mourn with bitterness, that this prerogative was not the fate of her adopted father, for where possibility itself is not absolutely excluded, such weaknesses of nature may find some excuse by veiling themselves under the suffrage of disappointment: but consider, my child, that the life of man is limited by the Almighty, and that none can pass from a world of mortal misery to one of immortal glory but through the friendly gates of that very death, the sound of which has filled you with alarm. Do you any longer wonder why I should look and talk calmly

of that change which will be so much to my advantage; but added, we will talk no more at present on a subject that I see with pain still afflicts you; I will rather draw your attention from me to fix it on yourself, for now the time is come when you should learn in what manner you were forced into my hands, and what destiny made you my companion in this desolated forest. Perhaps there was nothing in the world that would have answered so well to the generous design he meditated of giving my spirits relief as that of entertaining me with my own history, to which I listened with undivided attention.

“ I cannot declare to you,” said he, “ any particulars of those who gave you being, but without my assistance you had ever remained incapable of searching for them. I saw the poinard lifted over your head, and her who had given you to the world ready to expire by the same blow. I have hitherto, my daughter, spared you this cruel recital, but now it is proper you should no longer be ignorant of your origin. The twenty-third year of my forest vegetation was nearly completed,

pleted, in all which time no object had met my view but the trees with which it abounds, the beast that shelter themselves in its recesses, and the birds, whose tuneful notes harmonizes its profound solitude; all about me was tranquil, and even I, my wretched self, began to taste of tranquillity. One day, fatigued with a long hunt, I laid down on some grass to take a few moments of repose, which was very soon interrupted by cries the most dreadful, apparently proceeding from no great distance: I ran, much surprised, to hide myself from the view of those I did not chuse to encounter; but where best to conceal my uncouth figure from the ridicule of observation was not so easily determined; at last, after looking about on every side, a large hollow tree presented me with the convenience of its shelter, and I entered into it, well pleased with my local situation; from whence, without being seen, I became the spectator of a scene which I shall find some difficulty in describing.—Two women advanced towards the place of my retreat, both seeming under the influence of extraordinary terror; one of them, whose beauty and habit shewed her to be mistress of the other, held

in her arms a young infant.”——“ Oh! unfortunate as you are,” exclaimed the attendant, “ oh! most unfortunate lady! you come to these woods only to perish—what hope have you but in death? and that dear babe too, for whom you would resign your life, she too must share your destruction.”——Saying this she wrung her hands, and uttered cries louder than before.

The other in speechless agony answered only with her tears, and by pressing to her heart in frantic desperation the little object of her tenderness.—“ You was that child,” pursued the Narrator, regarding me with looks that seemed to say, you are now as dear to me as you then was to the mother who bore you.—“ Yes,” said he, “ it was yourself who caused the sighs and groans of this respectable stranger. I dare to announce her respectable—innocence, truth, and modesty had impressed their seals on her countenance.” I felt myself interested, and waited with impatience to catch the sound of her voice; I had conceived it to be soft and melodious; at last she spoke, and I was not wrong in my conjecture.—“ Cruel husband!” she said,
in

in tones of complaint rather than reproach—
 “Cruel father! come now and behold your
 unfortunate wife, your distracted daughter—
 it is you who have conducted me to this
 state, which shakes Reason on her throne—
 it is you who hunt me from society—it is
 you who force me to shelter my infant in
 this uninhabited wilderness, where we must
 expire together, equally pursued by your per-
 secution. . . . No, barbarous husband! though
 you hurl me to this abyss of misery—though
 you force me to fly from your tyranny—
 though, in despite of my best endeavours to
 conquer my aversion, I still hate you; yet
 the duty I owe myself has never let me be
 unfaithful to you. . . . No, I have not been
 guilty of infidelity—I have not broken the
 vows an unnatural father compelled me to
 make you,—It is you, it is he, who have
 usurped the power that belongs not to you.”

Her griefs no longer vented themselves in
 words; she stood like the silent effigy of woe,
 her child pressed between her breast, her eyes
 fixed upon the ground; the person who at-
 tended her renewed her loud lamentations,
 and, for my part, since the Countess was
 ravished

ravished from me, I do not remember ever to have felt myself so deeply affected.—“ I may be of use to these objects of Fortune’s persecution,” said I softly—when the same plaintive voice again broke upon my ear, and curiosity, for a moment, arrested my intention.

“ And thou—thou—” continued the poor forlorn—“ thou who shouldst have been my husband—thou who I have seen in a state so dreadful—doubtless they have taken thy life from thee, and now thou art waiting for me to rejoin thee in the night of the tomb! . . . but, no!—oh! no!—this beloved infant, whom I have just given to the light, has even stronger claims than thy own; for her sake, if the Almighty who feeds the ravens will send us sustenance in this terrible wilderness—for her sake I will yet try to lengthen out my tiresome existence,”

I could hold no longer, but was going to discover myself, and to cry out, “ God never forsakes the innocent! ”—yet a sound, which I imagined to be like that of horses feet at a distance, drove me back to my place of concealment. What alarmed me was unnoticed by

by them, for in pronouncing the last words your mother had fallen upon the earth, whilst the companion drowned in her own cries the signal she might otherwise have heard, that some people were approaching towards us.—“ Ah! what will become of us ! ”—exclaimed the bewildered creature; “ for the love of Heaven, Madam, try to gain a little strength, that we may crawl out of this hideous forest.—Who knows but some village may be near to afford us the succour we so much stand in need of.”

The sounds which were before indistinct now increased upon me, and I soon distinguished a man, well mounted, coming forward a full gallop, whose countenance, reeking with malevolence, spoke the purpose of his heart; he passed on to that spot where you had first beheld the day, and in a voice of thunder, accompanied with furious menaces, ordered this helpless victim to rise from the ground, and stand before him.—She tried to obey, but, after all, could only lift up her head, which rested on the fairest hand my eyes ever beheld—looking on him with the most beseeching air in the world.

“ Ah !

“ Ah, cease to persecute me !” she cried, “ let me live for this dear babe’s sake ! If you must strike—oh ! spare my infant—aim here your blow.—God may forgive the taking a life rendered odious by your cruelties :—but if you kill my child, that will be a crime for which you can expect no mercy. Strike then ! spare me not ! I am prepared for death, I even wish to die.—But spare, oh ! spare the innocent cause of my sufferings !”

“ I must stop here,” said the Recluse, “ to inform you what were my sensations as this scene passed before me—but surely you must have already surmised that my *own* crimes were revived in those of the furious husband—and that the afflictions of my Countess were but too well represented in those of your mother. As this idea seized upon me, my agitation was extreme, my feet were rooted to the earth on which I stood, yet I preserved my senses, and lost nothing of the circumstances that followed.”

The Chevalier listened to the intreaties of his wife with a much greater appearance of gratification than compassion; his inflamed
eyes

eyes were glutting themselves in vengeance on your sweet innocent face—in another moment his poinard pointed towards thy defenceless bosom—your courageous mother presented her own to receive the blow: her effort restrained the barbarian's arm, who, pushing her down, called out with verocity all his own!

“I thirst for blood, Madam; but since you are so ready to shed your own in defence of your progeny, *were* I to take it, your punishment would fall short of what I intend for you.—No! I will pierce thy heart, without giving thee the consolation of dying.” At the same time he strove to tear you from the grasp of your mother, but she defended you with wonderful perseverance, and by exertions the most astonishing, yet was on the very point of being conquered, when a troop of armed men rushed forward, and interfered between them. He who appeared to be the chief of this reinforcement flew upon the tyrant husband, and presented a pistol at his head, which the other returned by a stroke of that poinard raised for thy destruction, but it fell only on the horse of him
who

who was newly arrived; the blow fired his generous spirit—with impatience he darted from them, and with incredible swiftness lost himself in the woods: some of the party pursued him thither, whilst he who had taken the lead in this new scene of terrors, saved from the inevitable fate that awaited her, your most unhappy mother: he took her by force from the ground, placed her on his saddle, and took her off in despite of her cries: her distraction to see you torn from her arms, cast upon the earth, and left behind a prey for the beasts of the forest, less savage perhaps than those human monsters who dragged you from her fond embraces. Another of the men took up the companion of your mother before him, and I lost sight of them in a moment, though it was many minutes that their screams, which revibrated through the woods, rebounded back, and made so deep an impression on my saddened heart, that, whilst I am telling you the fact, I could almost imagine they are still sounding on my ears:—what became of all the other men I do not know; they had fled some one way, some another, and I found myself alone, as Heaven's appointed protector, to relieve thy wants—

wants—to watch over thy deserted infancy—and to cherish thee with a father's fondness."

"Penetrated by a sense of the new duties imposed upon me, I took thee in my arms, blessed thee, bore thee to my cottage, and in the best manner I was able baptized thee by the name of Rosalie—that ever beloved name, rendered so dear to me by having once belonged to my Countess: the ceremony of thy baptism wanted those rights which are usual in the church to render them sacred; and it is my injunction that you shall one day renew those vows, for which I am pledged to Heaven in all their ritual forms: and in the face of that world, from which thy melancholy fate has hitherto estranged thee." I bowed assent, for indeed I could not speak, so violent had been my emotions during the relation of my mother's adventure in the forest, particularly when he painted her distress at our separation, I thought my heart would have broken in pieces—our conversation ended for that time, but he soon after re-assumed it.

"I have

“ I have lately,” said the dearest of men, “ given to the susceptible bosom of my child pangs, the severity of which must have deeply wounded it. I see also with pleasure a few intervening hours restores your serenity: tell me, Rosalie (he added) are you sufficiently composed to enter with me once more on the subject of our earliest acquaintance?” I answered in the affirmative; and he had the goodness not to keep me in suspense.

“ I once told you,” continued he, “ that I was in possession of other precious gems, besides those which I brought with me from Anvers; and I then promised, at some future period, to tell you how these other fell into my hands: know then, that the additional jewels of which I speak are your own, natural as those belonging to myself are your gifted property.”

“ Pray answer me one question,” cried I, interrupting him with eagerness, “ how is it possible I should have jewels of my own? Who could give them to me? It could not be my mother, for was she not famishing with hunger in this forest? It could not be my

my father, for he you know would have killed me."

"I have much reason," he replied, "to believe, my dear, your mother was the rightful owner of these valuable trinkets, because I found them inclosed in a small box, on the very spot upon which, through fatigue and weakness, she had sunk down; the amount of them was extremely valuable, and I deposited them, together with my own, for your use, in a safe spot, to which I shall now conduct you, that hereafter you may be able to find them again without my assistance." He then leaned upon my arm, and, as we walked along to a part of the wood at no great distance, I asked him if I was not a very troublesome companion when he first took me under his protection.

"Yes! yes!" said he, smiling, "I had a good deal of trouble in rearing you to that age when you could live as I did—but I laid out my attentions to advantage, for your duty and affection has since repaid me for all the good nursing I bestowed upon you."

VOL: I.

I

"Dear

“ Dear father, I should like very much to know how it was that you managed me?”

“ Why, my child, to supply you with that nourishment nature prepares for all her animal and infant productions, I procured you a very excellent nurse.”

“ Is this nurse you tell me of still living,” said I, “ I think I would give a great deal to see her: next to yourself, how many obligations must I owe to this good nurse.—Ah! my father, from whence did you fetch her? and why send her away, before she could receive any expression of my kindness?”

“ I am not to blame,” replied the Recluse; “ your nurse was a native of this forest, and under these shades she expired long before you can remember.”

“ What then,” I replied, still more and more surpris'd, “ is it possible that any body besides ourselves have ever inhabited these woods?” It seems he had been diverting himself with my simplicity, and now made me understand that my nurse was a friendly doe, which

which had taken up and laid down her life in the forest of Ardennes.

When we arrived at our treasury, my eyes were almost dazzled with the sight of riches, the use of which I did not understand, nor was my heart captivated either by their splendour or their novelty : from this time we returned to our labours and our exercises, pursuing them with our usual avidity ; I often talked of my mother, and thought of her always ; he who I considered as my parent, had flattered me with the hopes, that by means of the casket, and other circumstances, I may one day be restored to her embraces.— I felt for her already the liveliest affection, founded on the knowledge of that tenderness for me which had been so fatal to her peace, perhaps also to her life : I could now think with delight, corrected by sorrow, on entering upon a world, the very idea of which I had hitherto contemplated with aversion : where would I not have ventured in pursuit of such a mother ? but how could I feel joy unmixed with sadness, when I reflected that before I began my search for one parent, the eyes of another must be closed on me for

ever?—and alas! even then, where was I to look for this beloved mother? My gracious protector did not know to what country she belonged; he was ignorant of her name, her connections; and how much less could he ascertain to me, that she was still living; in the calculation of chances, the odds were greatly against me, it must be acknowledged.

My dear Recluse passed another year in better health than he was accustomed to enjoy, or rather I believe the spirits he forced himself to assume, to divert the melancholy he fancied me to have imbibed from hearing the history of my mother, made me take for health what in him was only exertion; it is very certain I did not observe the approaches of his dissolution, till I could no longer shut my eyes upon them: in another six months he grew so feeble, that he could not leave our cottage without my succour: even when reduced to this extreme weakness he would say to me, “Though my strength decays, my voice is still left me; we have no time to lose; I must be diligent in reposing with you my last best instructions; and these lessons
returning

returning to your mind when you enter upon the great stage of life, aided by the love of virtue, and the natural strength of understanding you possess, will enable you to move gracefully along, whether the part you are destined to perform be humble or exalted."

"Ha!" said he, a few hours before his decease, "the last moment of my life approaches fast—I have no regret but at leaving you—I know you will mourn for me, yet let not your tears unman me."—Again he cried, "yes, I shall soon bid you adieu for ever—my philosophy abandons me at this awful moment—I cannot resist my fears.—It is not the separation of soul and body which robs me of my composure, but the uncertainty of my future state—I hope—and—I fear."—He was incapable of speaking another word; a mortal feebleness had taken possession of his whole frame. Seeing him in this cruel state, I plunged myself into the most frightful grief; with gladness I would have given up the half of those days allotted to me, could I have lengthened his by the sacrifice. He passed another night between life and death; but

when daylight was on the point of re-appearing, he uttered a soft sigh, as if he had awoke from a sound sleep—his eyes were re-animated—he recovered his voice, and spoke these words: “I have ever been an honest man—I have ever walked in the road of virtue—I have searched for the light of religion, and I adore the Sovereign Being, in whose awful presence I shall soon appear: he knows the uprightness, the purity of my soul. He is just—He is merciful.—I have now no fear——” He would have said fears, but in pronouncing the word he expired.

I did not forsake the side of his rustic bed for two days and two nights; frantic with grief I talked to him—I embraced him—I wept over him, till I was quite exhausted with weeping, watching, and fasting; but what were my agonies of distress, when I found I had not strength sufficient to bury his dear remains!—I would not for worlds that they should have been the prey of those beasts, from whose ferocity he had preserved the child of his charity. What I determined upon, after long deliberation, was to leave him

him in the bed on which he had rendered his last sigh—to make that his tomb, closing up by indefatigable labour every avenue, and every possible access to that dear hut, once the theatre of my joys, now the object of my misery.

Having completed my melancholy office, by raising up an everlasting barrier between me and the beloved Recluse, I went to reclaim from the bosom of the earth those jewels he had shewn me: then armed with my bow and arrows, I drank for the last time at that river which had so often refreshed me, and, with my eyes drowned in tears, quitted the spot where I had passed my infancy, and walked with fear towards a world, with the manners of which I was unacquainted, except in theory; at this time I was nearly eighteen years old.

I pursued with trembling steps the rout my deceased friend had bid me follow through the immense forest of Ardennes, greatly dreading that I should be lost in its frightful intricacies, but at last found myself disentangled: I rejoiced to see before me a large
 I 4 plain,

plain, and many houses at a distance. I also observed several men busy in the culture of the earth, whose brows bore marks of the fatigue their work had inflicted on them. I approached—my dress seemed to strike them with astonishment, and they asked me from whence I came?

There is a something of vanity in our nature, however reprehensible it may be, that would rather compel us to be guilty of a subterfuge, than by declaring the truth, that we should suffer ourselves to be considered as objects of ridicule: I had my share of this sort of vanity, which made me answer them, by saying that I had been nine days on my road to Brussels—that I had lost myself in the forest of Ardennes, where I encountered a band of robbers, and by them was stripped of my possessions; that I had been succoured by an old inhabitant of the woods, who in charity had given me the skins, with which I was covered, instead of my plundered vestment; that the bow and arrows I carried were also the gift of the same pious Christian, that I might be able to defend myself from
the

the beasts of prey, which abundantly infested the desert.

The peasant who interrogated, believed me. I turned from him to his companion, whose physiognomy pleased me, and I asked him if he would have the goodness to conduct me to his home, where I may find the comforts of a little nourishment and repose.—“Most willingly,” he replied, “if you will wait till I have finished my task; but if you cannot stay so long, go to that village which you see yonder, nobody there will refuse what you require.”

I liked better to wait where I was, than by going further perhaps subject myself to insult, which my strange dress might expose me to. I assisted the labourer to complete his work, and having observed that he alone was engaged in the culture of as much ground as might afford food enough for a hundred people—“Why,” said I, “do you give yourself all this trouble?—You must be rendering a great deal of service to your friends and neighbours; or are your own family sufficiently

ficiently numerous to consume all that this vast large piece of ground must produce?"

"No!" he replied; "the tenth part would suffice me and my family; this field on which I work with so much labour and fatigue belongs not to me; it is the property of a man who lives in our village, and it is he who enjoys the fruits of my industry—it is my engagement to him that prevents my returning with you immediately, for I am obliged to toil till the last moment of my time is expired."

"You have a master then hard-hearted and cruel?"

"On the contrary," he replied; "him to whom I owe submission is the best of masters; he is a great man, but kind, good, and affable, as he is great, and his people love him as they do the Heavens that cover them. Yet, alas!" added he, with a sigh, "there are those again, hired servants like ourselves, who govern him; men barbarous and inflexible, who, following the example of great ministers, use the name of their master for all
forts

sorts of oppression that may eventually turn out to their own private emolument. It is such wretches as these that are incapable of feeling by sympathy the misery they inflict, and who out of our obscurity and labour derive opulence and *eclat* above their condition, without bestowing one thought on the torturing cruelties by which they extort from the poor the overflowing abundance of their ill-gotten riches."

"Your case is a very hard one," said I, "and I pity you from my heart."

"We should be very unhappy indeed," he replied, "if from our births we were not accustomed to this sort of usage; but as it is, no remedy can be expected: and by adding discontent to poverty, we should only double our misfortunes." He now ceased to work, turned towards the village, and asked me to follow him.

We walked on together in almost total silence; my companion was tired, and I could do nothing but muse on the strange things he had been telling me.—We soon arrived at the
cottage

cottage of my new protector, and I could not help saying to myself, ah! how does this hut remind me of that I have quitted in the forest of Ardennes! the retrospection filled me with a thousand emotions, but I had no leisure to indulge them.

A woman neatly clad, and two lovely children, ran forwards to share the honest labourer's caresses, and tenderly to complain of the fatigue he had undergone for their sakes; they next turned their eyes upon me, with a very natural expression of something, which civility prevented them from explaining.—My friend presented them to me, and in doing so he said, “Here, young man, here are all my consolations—look at them—then tell me if you cannot find in these dear objects enough to make me pursue with courage my daily avocations?” I bowed, in token of submission to his opinion, and stooped down to caress a pretty little girl, who, creeping by degrees nearer and nearer to my side, ventured at last to touch my garment, with a sort of look that seemed to say you are no beast, why then should I fear you. Her father in the mean time did not stop speaking, but
— added—

added—"Yes, it is for them that I rejoice in my slavery, when I leave this dear wife and these charming children, with the knowledge that I am going to be useful to them, it is their absence I only regret, and to labour for them becomes an employment of ease."

Just so, thought I, would my dear Recluse have spoken, had he been in this man's situation: the wife now busied herself in preparing our frugal repast, and it delighted me to observe with what eagerness her mind flew out to meet the wishes of her husband.

I am now about to detail the only instance of intemperance with which I have to accuse myself, and there are ladies in the world, I dare say, who may for once in their lives have been overtaken as I was. We sat down at table, and eat with great pleasure of a *ragout*, made chiefly of herbs, some eggs, but very highly seasoned.—My host presented me with a large glass of liquor, such as I had never seen before; my only beverage till then being simple water from the brook, the insipidity of which, compared with what they called wine, made me think the latter extremely strong,

strong, and I confess too that I thought it extremely agreeable. I sipped it by little and little—my head grew confused, and, in spite of my endeavours to the contrary, my eyes closed.—I asked for a bed; they had the goodness to assist me in reaching it—I fell into a sound sleep, and awakened no more till the day was far advanced.

As soon as I awoke I called for my host, and giving into his hand one of my diamonds—"See," I exclaimed, with pretended joy, "see what the robbers have fortunately left me; for this single jewel I hope to receive a good price; do me the favour to sell it at the next town, and buy for me all that is necessary to the continuation of my journey."—"To-day is a holiday," said he, "and I shall serve you with a great deal of pleasure." He immediately set out to fulfil his promise, and returned the next morning with the complete habit of a fine Chevalier, together with no very trifling sum of money. It was the first coin I had ever seen in my life; however, after he had told me the amount, I pretended to count over the various pieces, as if I had really understood their
their

their value. Here I cannot but remark, that our deficiency in knowledge is often, and not ill supplied by the effrontery of making it be supposed that we do possess it.

As I had not discovered my disguise to the peasant, it was no wonder that, taking me for a young boy, he should bring the habit of one; and though I was disappointed, it was impossible I should be displeased at a mistake, for which he was in no manner accountable. I vexed a little for an error that caused me, from necessity, to lay down the resolution I had before taken up, of assuming the dress of my sex in the town to which I was going: however, my pique at this frustration of my plan was soon got over, and the accident that at first disconcerted me, now put on quite another appearance. It has always been my custom, to make the best of every situation into which fate has transported me; and it was thus that I reasoned on the present occasion, till I had brought myself into perfect good humour.

“Perhaps,” said I, “it is better, after all, that I should appear as a man, to secure myself

self from the dangerous seductions of mankind, and to claim that protection from them which in my own character I would neither solicit nor accept. Suppose I were to confess myself a woman, am I not a friendless and deserted woman, without parents—without connections—without knowledge—without every thing, whom rogues may plunder, and villains may betray with impunity?—Is there any body to protect me?—No! in this vast expanse of world I have not *now* one—one solitary being interested in my preservation.—Ah! to be sure I must have shut myself in a nunnery, to have secured my conduct blameless, that, if my parents should ever recognize me, I might not from my folly, or ill fortune, bring disgrace upon them; besides, how am I ever to discover this beloved mother, were I to immure myself between the walls of a convent. It is her that I pursue—that I will pursue as long as I live—and I now see Providence has interfered in forcing me to change my purpose.—Yes! it is all for the best (added I); certainly it is best that I should be a man; what distinction of dress have I ever known? though I continue to wear the apparel of men, it is not as if I
had

had been accustomed to what belongs to my sex, and renounced them for intrigue or levity; what have I to fear, as long as I support the honour of my assumed, and the delicacy of my real character. Ah! could I consult my dear Recluse on this determination, I am sure it would be sanctioned with his approbation; he who taught me to reason, would listen with pleasure to hear my humble imitations of his masterly sentiments:—there was an avidity about my heart that communicated itself to my thoughts, words, and actions. I thought it was right—I said it was right—and began to robe myself as a Chevalier, and all this in a moment.

I staid yet a few days longer with my host, to learn the manners of a gentleman; in which, I assure you, the good labourer was very capable of instructing me—the politeness with which he accepted a gratuity I presented him for his hospitality, fixed me in a certain idea that I had before entertained, which was, that his education had been very far removed from his occupation; my only friend having taught me to decide on the different situations of men so well, that I was

seldom mistaken in them. I was so strongly impressed with the opinion that this man was much above the vulgar, that before I quitted his cottage I demanded of him, if he had always lived in the same village he now inhabited? “No!” said he, “I have formerly resided in great cities, but my fortune is much changed: however, I do not repine. Religion has been the cause of my misfortunes, and who shall dare to think with regret of what he loses in a cause so glorious.” He paused for a moment, lifted his eyes to Heaven, and then proceeded.—“Notwithstanding the persecutions so frequent in France during the time when Catherine of Medicis reigned in the name of her daughter, I would not change the mode of worship followed by my forefathers, and revered by myself; I was, therefore, forced to fly my province, and leave behind me all my riches; this I did without murmuring; and, destitute of every support, I adored the hand which had despoiled me—too happy that I was thought worthy to suffer for the faith I professed, I came to this place to enjoy the repose I could not command in my own country. Catherine, who was ever of the strongest party,
sometimes

sometimes took ours, and made divers edicts in our favour, but I refused to profit by them. I had preserved," added he, looking tenderly on his wife, "all that I esteemed valuable. I brought my treasure to this village, where we have ever since lived peaceably on the fruits of our labours: here there is no one to tyrannize over the concerns and minds of others—here every body has the liberty to think after his own manner—here we have nothing to fear from informers—and here too it is that, in the bosom of my family, I quaff the delicious draughts of felicity."

"Surely," said I to myself, hearing him speak after this manner, "the spirit of my Preserver must have infused itself into the heart of this good man. Ah! if the world were peopled with such as him, how safely might I wander through it."

By the assistance of my good host, and his charming family, I procured a guide to conduct me. We exchanged mutual, I may say affectionate, farewells, and I left them with the resolution of staying at some town

or village near the forest, in the desperate hope that, from its vicinity to the dreadful scene of action that made me its inhabitant, I might discover my mother, or be discovered by her. . . . Alas! forlorn enough, indeed, was this hope—I had not the smallest clue to direct me through a labyrinth of dark difficulties; however, I made the experiment . . . it answered better to my expectations than to my wishes; but still on the same pursuit I determined on travelling through Flanders. Accordingly I began my journey, continued it by Brussels, from thence to Mons, from Mons to Valenciennes, and at last fixed myself at Lille: my inquiries had never ceased, neither had they been in any sort productive.

I am now, without reservation, going to give you many proofs of the fallacy with which I reasoned, at the countryman's hut, on the propriety of my putting on the dress of a Chevalier, and to set at nought the fine philosophy of young girls, who pretend to judge for themselves, and to tell such infant disciples of Wisdom, that I confess my plan of entering into a most unnatural disguise
was

was not only infinitely dangerous, but infinitely foolish. . . . Attend, therefore, dear Readers, to the hazard of false appearances, let them in promise be ever so flattering beneath views, agreeable but delusive, lurk all the disasters of wilful deception.—My youth, my inexperience, my motive for the folly I committed, may palliate my offence against that feminine delicacy which cannot be transgressed with impunity, and I sincerely hope no woman will ever follow me through steps so replete with dangers, or prejudge the error of innocence with the severity due only to libertanism.

Amongst the very few acquaintances I made during my residence at Lisle, a Madam Dubreuil, the wife of a rich Bourgeois, chiefly attracted my notice. I had heard her well spoken of before I saw her; the men very much praised her beauty, but still more for the reserve with which she covered it—one being an every-day sight, the other extremely novel. The ladies, indeed, would not be friends with her, and my dear Count de **** had made me understand that this was no unfavourable symptom of female

merit: for my part I thought her quite charming, and having nothing, except a reunion with my mother, so much in view as performing the last injunctions of him to whose commands I owed implicit obedience, I pitched upon Madam Dubreuil as the most proper woman in the world, whose assistance I could ask, and in whose secrecy I might safely repose my confidence,

To this lady then I unbosomed myself; she heard my adventures with astonishment, assured me she was flattered by my friendship, promised to serve me in every thing, vowed eternal silence, and kept her word so well, that, by her contrivance, I received baptism from the hands of her own confessor, without so much as his knowing that I was the same Chevalier, who, for the sobriety of his conduct, had already made some *eclat* in Lisle.

Madam Dubreuil conceived so decided a partiality for me—was so interested in every thing that concerned me—busied herself so much in forming my mind and manners to all the ease of modern politeness, that I was
feldom

seldom out of her sight. I took infinite pleasure in the lessons she gave me, and my advancement in the science of knowing what to do with one's self was extremely rapid.

An attachment so innocent was nevertheless not without its inconveniences. The good-natured world appointed us to each other for lovers; these reports reached the ears of her husband, and he gave to them more credit than they deserved. It was soon perceived that he watched all our motions in a manner that could not but make known his jealousy. Our words, our looks, our steps, were all investigated with Argus-eyed suspicion, and I cannot tell how much I felt chagrined at the discovery. I was not the first to find it out; his agreeable wife instructed me in our mutual bad fortune: had she been as blind as myself, I might have always continued in darkness, having lived scarce long enough in the world to understand that those who are least liked are sometimes the best received. Since then I am much wiser in these matters, and know that the husband has seldom a dearer friend than the

gallant of his wife. I have more than once seen a coquette make assignments with her lover from the window, whilst her wedded lord has stood at her side grinning and seemingly well satisfied with his destiny.

Notwithstanding the courtesy with which I was received by Monsieur Dubreuil, now that my eyes were opened I could distinguish the emotions, or, to express myself better, the agonies, in which I held him suspended. I remonstrated to my friend on the mischief I might do to her happiness, and even with tears regretted my fate that I must either tear myself from the only friend I had in the world, or indulge my own felicity at the expence of her comfort and reputation. She laughed at my complaints, assured me she perfectly loved but did not pity Monsieur, who, in the midst of a thousand good qualities, had a single bad one, for which, by my means, he was now receiving a very proper punishment.—“So far from leaving me,” said she, “I desire your attentions to me may increase; look round you in my family, and give these little trifling sort of orders

orders to my servants which will speak us to be on the best terms imaginable."

She gave me these commands in a tone so decided, that I durst not oppose them, and I put myself, though on this occasion rather reluctantly, under her sole guidance. For some time we went on as usual, with the addition of now and then giving myself the airs she prescribed for my conduct; every small familiarity I used in the house worked anew upon the passions of Monsieur. At last he was thrown quite off his guard, and, unable to contain himself any longer, he said very severe things to his wife, who laughingly repeated them again to me.

The more light Madam Dubreuil made of her own situation, the more I was alarmed by it.—"I would not, for worlds," said I, "interrupt the peace between you; rather let me lose the joy of beholding you."

"Pish!" cried she; "why do you talk of leaving me?—the little farce we act what can be more harmless?—believe me it will eventually

eventually end in Monsieur's reformation and my felicity."

"Not unless you betray me to him," I replied in some consternation; "how else will you be ever able to undeceive him?"

"I have already considered this objection," said she, "and have only your permission to ask, that, however remote may be your removal from this place, you will, on the eve of your departure, and not before, let me tell him our secret under the solemnity of an oath, that he never will reveal it. This sacrifice, if you make it to my friendship, must satisfy all his doubts, and make us happier than ever!"

I loved her too well to refuse any thing she could ask of me; and, indeed, the proposal she made removed my strongest objection to continue our deception. It was for her sake I grieved to carry on a design that seemed to threaten her repose, and to her I made an oblation of my scruples to confide the truth of my false pretensions to any body but herself,

herself. This act of generosity was not required of me till I turned my back upon Lisle, and afterwards what harm could it do me. I was sure she would not omit to bind him by an oath, and I had no doubt but he would hold it sacred.

From this time Monsieur and Monsieur were at even and odds, not by words or by blows, but by volleys of glances and shrugs, levelled at each other, was this comical battle of rivalry carried on between us. It was my custom, after having devoted my earliest hours to Madam Dubreuil, to absent myself merely to make my toilet, and then to return and take my place by her side at the table. One day that I went as usual, her chair was vacant; I inquired for her, and was answered in a surly tone by Monsieur, that he had reason to think me so perfectly master in his house as to make any questions about his wife very unnecessary. I pretended not to comprehend his meaning, and flew to the chamber of my friend to see what was become of her,

I found

I found they had been quarrelling about the old affair, and, though Madam Dubreuil was not very angry, she refused to appear at dinner.—“ Ah ! ” cried I, much disturbed, “ all that I have foreseen will happen ; your husband’s resentment is roused—you cannot yet give up my secret, and you will be miserable. . . Go to him : for the love of God appease his fury, regain his confidence, secure your own tranquillity—we will no more expose ourselves to his suspicions—we may continue to see each other in a third place, but never again let us meet under this roof I beseech you.”—I pronounced these intreaties at her feet, and I saw her affected by the urgency with which I delivered them.

She raised and tenderly embraced me.—“ My dear Girl,” said she, “ I always loved you—but your good sense charms, and your discretion captivates me : in short, my friendship has no fault to find with you, except that you make me appear extremely contemptible in my own eyes. . . . I now see clearly enough that you have been always in the right, I always in the wrong.”

In

In consequence of this arrangement I remained at home many days without seeing Madam Dubreuil; at length she sent me word to meet her in a public garden, where all the town inhabitants assembled every Sunday, but where we were sure to find few people on any other day, because their commerce occupy them all the rest of the week. I flew with joy to obey the summons: we had a long, delightful interview. She was more kind, more tender, than ever; she informed me that Monsieur was restored to his senses, without her making any other concessions than those to which I had persuaded her, and returned me a thousand thanks for the good advice I had given her. It was late before we parted; and those stolen meetings were renewed as often as she saw a favourable opportunity to send me the appointment. We always contrived that they should be conducted with privacy, as much to prevent the circulation of idle stories about our attachment as to entirely quell the now-subsiding doubts of her husband.

This husband suddenly seemed to take a part moderate and sensible, having confided
to

to one of his friends all the suspicions by which he had been tormented. He sent him to me, with a conciliating message, to signify his surprise that he did not see me as usual, and to invite me to renew my visits.

The gentleman who came to me, on this friendly embassy, would have been in reality what he supposed me to be—the lover of Madam Dubreuil, had not the extreme delicacy she observed to his whole sex forbidden him to hope. I often conversed with him, and found in him a great mixture of steadiness and frivolity, of exactness and negligence, of good breeding and incivility; in short, he could be, at pleasure, a philosopher, a trifler, a beau, a sloven, a fine gentleman, or a brute; and which ever character he chose to assume nobody could excel him in it.

He first began with congratulating me in the tone of a sentimentalist on my good fortune, in having made a conquest so much to my honour, as I certainly had done, in reducing so frigid and hard a heart as Madam Dubreuil to warmth and softness.—

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He proceeded to treat his own bad success with the most laughable ridicule ; he looked on his toes, saw that his buckle was awry, damned his valet ; he disordered his hair with his fingers, and then declared, with much politeness, the pleasure he received by accommodating the slight difference which had created itself between me and Monsieur Dubreuil ; then ended his harangue by cursing all the women upon the face of the earth, sending them to the Devil without reservation.

I listened, but did not interrupt him till he had talked himself quite out of breath, when I took upon me to vindicate the reputation of Madam Dubreuil. I assured him he was entirely mistaken as to the sort of affection I entertained for that lady : my love for her, I solemnly avowed, was as innocent as that from woman to woman.—“ The esteem I owe her,” said I, “ and which will only end with my life, has nothing to do with passion : it is founded on that very virtue which you do me too much honour by supposing she has forfeited in my favour, and on the knowledge

He

knowledge I possess of those rare qualities which form her character."

"All this," said he, with incredulity marked on his countenance, "all this hangs mighty well together. I know you to be a man of honour, and none but a scoundrel will betray the secrets of his mistress:—but let me ask; pray, if your love is so confounded consciencious, what cause can you have given to create suspicion in Dubreuil?—faith, I hope your actions have been as pure as your intentions, then I shall pronounce you the most perfect of all Chevaliers, and desire of all things to be placed at the very tip-top pinnacle of your friendship."

I laughed so heartily at this singular address, that it enlarged the scope of his raillery.—"Now," said he, "I lose a great deal of that reverence I entertained for the sublimity of your wisdom: this gaiety ill becomes a politician so refined in the science of intrigue; prithee put on thy gravity again—clothe thy really handsome face in the outward signs of grace, and we shall have

have no one prude in all Lisle who will not court you to take charge of her reputation."

"It is not prudes," I replied, "neither is it coquettes, that I am ambitious to serve."

"Under what description then do you bring your mistrefs?" cried he; "for I vow to G—, in the long routine of my gallantries, I have never met, of course could never love, a woman who was not either a prude or a coquette."

"And yet," said I, "by your own confession, you once carried your devoirs to the feet of Madam Dubreuil."

"Granted—and what then?—what inference do you draw from that circumstance against my general conclusion?"

"A strong one," said I. "If she had not been a person of honour, I am sure you have too much vanity to suppose *your* addresses would have been rejected."

“ You are too severe,” cried he, between jest and earnest ; “ you are also too young for my antagonist—too pleasant for my anger, and too sentimental for my confidence. I almost wish you were a woman, that I might know what sort of vengeance to demand of you.”

“ How have I offended you that you wish me so much mischief ? ”

“ By bringing virtue,” said he, “ into contact with your favourite’s rejection of my solitudes.—Do you imagine virtue had any thing to do with it ?—No—no—assure yourself of the contrary ; it was all a matter of chance, a confounded unlucky chance. She happened just then to prefer her husband, and that unnatural preference was my overthrow. Now, with all your demureness, may I never be *more* fortunate if I do not think you have received demonstration by kindness centered on yourself, that virtue had nothing to do in promoting my mortification.”

“ Very well,” I replied carelessly ; “ I see it is impossible to establish your faith by any other

other rule than your own : time will discover which of us are in the right. . . . But tell me truly ; do you suppose Monsieur Dubreuil desires to be entirely friends with me ? ”

“ He bade me tell you so : he invites you—he will receive you kindly. With all your pretence, there is something of frankness about you that makes me your friend, even whilst I would be your rival, if Madam would let me—yet I advise you to be a little on your guard, and not to trust the husband too far.” Here our conference broke up ; he shook me heartily by the hand, wished me success, and so we parted.”

I clothed myself in the caution left with me by this man of medley, and went to dine at the house of my friend. I found her alone ; we embraced with great gladness, and rejoiced together on our emancipation from the shackles of constraint, which that demon Jealousy had forged to keep us asunder.—She told me her husband had restored me entirely to his good opinion.—“ I have convinced him,” said she, “ that you never have been my lover—that I love only him-
self :

self: he is satisfied with me, and now, that he recalls you, he leaves me nothing to complain of."

I would not disturb her repose by telling her the hints I had that morning received from the friend of Monsieur. I seemed to partake of her security, and, when he joined us, was almost persuaded that he must be sincere in the hearty reception he gave me.—“I have not deserved,” said he, “the condescension you make me, in returning to a house from which my ill humour must have driven you. I know I have behaved scurvily—I am sorry for it, and will take care, for the future, that nothing shall interrupt our harmony.”

His apology given in so handsome a manner, if it did not absolutely remove all doubts that some sinister design lay lurking at the bottom of a change so sudden, yet I felt charmed at his politeness, because I saw, in the sparkling eyes of my dear protectress, the very perfect pleasure she took in seeing us reconciled to each other; for I assure you, Reader, I was not backward in meeting his advances.

advances. He obliged me to take my old place next to his wife at table, and, in the presence of his servants who waited, affected to regret my other engagements which had so long caused me to leave it unoccupied, or to be filled by some one whose society could not bring with it any recompence for my absence. —In short, if I were to repeat the half of his professions, I might fill a volume. There were other company at dinner, but we supped alone; and from that time I began to feel myself more at home, at least more at my ease in the family of my friend, than I had ever been before. My visits were daily and all day long; yet Monsieur would sometimes reproach me that I did not pass so much of my time with them as I used to do.

In the thickest of our intimacy, which had now been re-established several weeks, the gentleman who brought me letters of recal, in the name of Monsieur Dubreuil, would often ask me how we put our horses together? and I assured him we were always as civil to each other as at the seasons when himself could witness to our cordiality; for he some-

times made one of our party, though never by the invitation, or with the approbation of Madam, who had taken a great pique at him for his presumption in addressing her—there are many wives, no doubt, ready to accuse her of too great severity ; yet some there are, I hope, who are inclined to follow her example.

One day, as we met by accident in the street, he stopped me with the usual question of—“ Well, my little Adventurer, how goes it on with Dubreuil—has he not discovered himself to you ? ”

“ Explain,” said I, “ or it is impossible I should understand you. . . . What is there so ridiculous in Monsieur, Madam, or the little Adventurer, as you are pleased to call me, that we should be eternally exposed to your raillery ? ”

“ Oh ! I see you are on the high ropes,” he replied, “ so I wish you a good morning.” He turned on his heel, then put his head back, and, speaking to me over his shoulder, added,

added, " That man is a d—— fool who, having a friend that would prevent him, runs his head against a post."

I was sorry for the offence I had given him, for I saw plainly enough that he knew of some mischief which threatened me, and which he was willing to reveal if I had not stopped him by my impertinence. Full of repentance for my error, I ran to overtake, and at last came up with him; but by all the concessions I could make, though he gave me pardon at the first word, I could only get out of him that I should soon hear Monsieur propose making a short excursion to the country, advising, however short he may say his absence would be, to expect him much before his own appointment, and to conduct my affairs with his wife as circumspectively as I should do if assured he was watching under his own roof to find out a certain secret of which I was most extremely tenacious.

I thanked him for his well-intended counsel, but assured him the purity of Madam Dubreuil and my own honour left us no-

thing to fear from a surprisal; adding, no discovery could be made in our conduct that would call a blush into our cheeks, even in a Court of Conscience, of which Virtue herself were Presidentress.

Little impression did this hint of caution make upon my mind, till I heard, a few days after, Monsieur actually propose the very journey of which I had been forewarned, and then I heard it with great evenness of spirits—neither his presence nor absence could affect our friendship, and the only thing that discomposed me was, that this pretended excursion, which was to detain him a week or more, exemplified a truth painful enough, and I could no longer doubt that his professions of esteem for me only served to cover the most inveterate dislike. I did not apprehend any fatal consequences to myself from his revenge, but I dreaded for my friend every thing that was unpleasant from another change in his humour. All these surmises I kept to myself. He departed, and we lived, as before, like two sisters who prefer no society to that of their own.

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On the third day that we had been left to ourselves, Madam Dubreuil, who on all occasions delighted to hear me speak of the days I passed in the forest of Ardennes, and who, never tired of those tender effusions my heart dictated to my tongue, when indulged in talking of my revered Recluse, asked me to go over with her again that part of my history which contained his advice to me when he should be no more; and I, forced without guide, without protection, to enter alone on the wide world.

Nothing could be better adapted to give me exquisite delight than to gratify the request of Madam Dubreuil; I even went beyond it, and for two hours we had not done with the subject.—All this time, unknown to me, Monsieur, who had come back by stealth, as I was informed he would do, was concealing himself in a closet, divided by so thin a partition from the room we occupied, that every word I uttered made its way to him: his intentions were to detect us in a criminal engagement, instead of which I had the honour to entertain him with so much of my birth and education as recomposed his
own

own troubles at the expence of creating new ones to myself. I went home that evening without being instructed in my new misfortune, nor did Monsieur shew himself to any body in his family, till on the very day when he was expected to return, having left his house the moment his curiosity was satisfied, and hid himself in that of his friend.

The day following we lived together as we had done those that preceded it; Madam Dubreuil giving me instructions appertaining to my sex, and I in receiving them with the most grateful avidity: towards the close of evening Monsieur joined us, as if he had that moment come off his journey: he flew to salute us with extravagant joy, and pressed me in his arms with a new sort of warmth that somewhat surpris'd, though I cannot say it alarmed me; the only remarks I made to myself was, that his jealousy had passed away—that he no longer suspected me of a dishonourable attachment to his wife—and that our charming intercourse of friendship would not again be interrupted by his caprices—the more I saw of him, the more I was confirmed in this opinion. He treated
me

me with the confidence of a brother; his manners were open, his air lively, and his good humour bore such genuine marks of sincerity, that it was impossible to believe deceit or distrust could lurk under them.

He asked me how I had contrived to vary the amusements of Madam, so as to make his absence supportable to her; there was a little vanity in this speech, which Madam Dubreuil corrected pleasantly enough, by assuring him, that, next to his own, there was no society in the world where she should have less reason to complain of solitude than in mine. So far from taking this answer amiss, he flattered her good taste; adding, with a smile, “ Yet I do not resign to you the sole faculty of distinguishing merit; I know how to judge of the Chevalier’s pretensions; and very much doubt whether your partiality for him is stronger than my own—his figure, the sound of his voice, and his modesty, I may venture to say, are quite as captivating to me as to yourself.”

These praises covered my face with blushes, but my friend was so delighted with them,
that

that she touched my foot with her toe, accompanied by a glance full of expression, to signify her approbation.

These distinguishing marks of favour passed on the evening of his arrival; we all took our repast with extraordinary gaiety, and whenever I made an effort to bid them a good night, he would find some means or other of detaining me longer, so that it was late before I got home to my lodgings, leaving behind me a promise that I would be with them again early the next morning.

From this time I saw nothing to apprehend from a less favourable change in his sentiments towards me—on the contrary, his solicitations that I would entirely take up my residence in his family, very much incommoded me; for as his intreaties were supported by those of my friend, it puzzled me to refuse, though determined not to accept them. He would often look at me, and smile—then rally me on the whiteness of my skin, the delicacy of my complexion, or the effeminacy of my air—asking me if I could swear at all, remarking that he had never
heard

heard me utter an oath, or seen me drink more than three glasses at a sitting, from our first acquaintance. Yet, still I did not understand that he spoke with any sort of meaning, much less that he was in possession of my secret; I therefore put on no airs of constraint, but pleased to see him well satisfied with both his wife and myself. I answered with my natural vivacity, that the want of these accomplishments which he noted in my education, were, I hoped, pardonable on the score of my youth; and that it was extremely probable, time, together with his example, might bring about my reform: at which he would set up a loud laugh, and run out of the room, telling me he was sure I was a very honest person, under whose protection his wife would reap the double advantage of entertainment and security; "for," added he, "you have the wit of a man, and the innocence of a woman."

Had we gone on in this manner, it might have done very well; but this new misfortune did not end here; it was not enough that I should be known to him, for what I was I must also have the mortification of being told

told by himself, that he had found me out—and of listening to proposals so humiliating, that my face burns with shame even to repeat them. However, I am not yet come exactly to that part of my story, when I shall be forced to reveal them. Monsieur was a politician in the art of intrigue, and did not too suddenly tear off the mask which disguised his intentions.

In my conscience I believe that Madam Dubreuil was keener sighted to the truth than myself; I think also that she beheld it with some degree of chagrin, not that she made me the confidante of her suspicions, but I saw a change in her humour, altogether unaccountable; she was not less my friend than before, but she was often thoughtful, sometimes sad—and once or twice I surprised her, shedding tears; for which she accounted by laying them to the charge of a violent headache that had prevented her from sleeping all night, or some other cause equally equivocal. I had already acquired sufficient self experience to understand that the calm of a woman's mind will now and then be a little ruffled, without looking about to see from what quarter

quarter of the compass blows the breeze, by which they are agitated; and to this negligence it was that I ascribed those nameless somethings or nothings that disturbed the tranquillity of Madam Dubreuil.

One day that she was gone out to make some visits before my usual hour of visiting her, I found only Monsieur to receive me, who in giving me his hand, and shaking mine, as he was used to do, gave it, I thought, one pressure more than might have sufficed to bid me welcome this child of mistrust, which I dignify by calling it, thought evaporated in the birth, and might never have formed into any thing like its own shape again, but from the conversation that constituted our *tête-à-tête*; at first we talked only of the weather, the news of the day, and Madam Dubreuil; the mention of her name put it into his head to be more pointed, though by no means explanatory.

“The more I see of you,” said he, “the more I am satisfied with your conduct, and feel myself transported by the honour you do
my

my wife, in devoting so much of your time to her."

"You have not always thought of me so favourably," I replied; "confess the truth? Have you never been jealous of me? Have you never regarded me with suspicions I did not deserve?"

"In the name of Heaven," he cried, "remember my folly no longer! I would now make you all manner of reparation."

"You are very generous," said I; "besides, you take up a great deal of courage thus to excuse me, and condemn yourself."

"That is true," he replied; "especially as you have yet said very little in your own defence; however, it does not require many words to remove certain prejudices built on error. It is you who have convinced me that you regard Madam Dubreuil only as a friend; I ask for my share in your affections—I ask you to love me with as much warmth as you do her, and I shall return it to you with my whole heart."

"You

“ You require too much of me,” I replied; “ it is out of my power to love any man as I love Madam Dubreuil.”

I began to doubt once more, and said this on purpose to try if my decided preference for his wife might disturb him; in which case I should be very certain that he had not penetrated through my disguise; but his answer redoubled my fears:

“ What you want, I suppose,” cried he, “ still to make me uneasy about my wife—that is now quite out of the question; from this moment I shall have no other inquietude than to find out the means of pleasing you, and perhaps the sentiment which to-day you refuse me, your bounty may extend to me hereafter: in the mean time be convinced, my dear little Chevalier, nobody can esteem you more or love you better than I do.”

The return of Madam Dubreuil interrupted a conversation, which was growing too importunate on the part of her husband, and too uneasy to myself, for me to have supported my moiety of it much longer with any

thing like gaiety or indifference. I could not rally my spirits the whole day afterwards, and I went home early to reflect on what Monsieur had been saying to me.—The more I considered, the more I was perplexed what sort of judgement to make of his words, much less of his looks, which gave them a still more inexplicable meaning; and, after a sleepless night of reflection, I could bring myself to no determination, whether my sex was or was not discovered by this my perpetual tormenter—for his having found it out was his own impertinent behaviour: against it I had no person in my confidence but his wife, who I knew would have given up her life rather than have betrayed me to him; all I could conclude upon was, to throw myself less in the way of his inquiries, and I actually kept from the house several days, pleading indisposition for my absence.

This plan did not at all answer the design for which it was adopted—on the contrary, it brought Monsieur almost every hour to my house, full of inquiries, which I could very well have dispensed with. Sometimes he would force himself into my apartment, in spite

spite of the orders I had given my servants not to admit any visitor whatever: this was a most unlucky circumstance for me; Madam Dubreuil had the goodness to call at my door twice, and, stopped by the porter's negative, went back without seeing me. She afterwards got information from my servants, or her own, that her husband had been better received; and this intelligence, no doubt, served to strengthen the symptoms of a growing suspicion, which, without my understanding them, were beginning to shew pretty plainly before I retired myself from her society, merely to avoid that of her husband, who was odious to me, and for whom I had taken up the most rooted aversion.—This dislike might have its origin in caprice, but it was not personal—it was not mine—it was the caprice of modesty, whose maiden sweetness shrinks at the approach of the invader, be his steps ever so cautious.

Finding it impossible to keep my doors barred against the entrance of this enemy to my repose, who, without declaring himself, contrived to render his assiduities so very baneful, that I should have died under them

with mere vexation, if I had not taken up a resolve to put away my indisposition—to mix more with the other acquaintance I had made at Lisle, and only to carry my visits occasionally to the house of Monsieur Dubreuil, except at such times as I could see the dearest of my friends with more freedom, when he took any short excursion to the country.

He called at my door just as I had decided on the part I was to act, and, in consequence of it, cast from me the web of artificial complaints in which I had wrapped myself—he did not then insist on seeing me, but seemed transported with the account he received of my amendment, and only left a message, to desire I would spend the day with his wife, who suffered a great deal from her impatience to see me, the truth of which I would not allow myself to doubt, and instantly prepared to obey the kind summons she had sent me. Guess then, O reader! what must have been the sensations of a grateful, tender heart like mine, when, running to meet her embraces, she repelled my advance with a frozen air?—she was glad to see me recovered, but did not expect the honour of so *early* a
visit

visit—feared I had ventured out too soon; my disorder must have been extremely severe indeed, that a lady's personal inquiries were not admitted, though those of a gentleman (perhaps from his superior powers of administering to my entertainment in the hours of convalescence), were, she understood, more fortunate.

I had given myself no small credit, when yielding up the society of a friend so beloved, that it was to the preservation of her peace to which I made the sacrifice of my own contentment, and I received the reproachful civility of her reception with a sort of agony that pierced me to the soul; I saw at once all my misfortune, my heart palpitated, my eyes filled with tears, and I was just going to fall at her feet to explain the motives of my conduct, when the author of my disagreeable situation stopped me, by making his appearance, and loading me with his tiresome congratulations, stuffed with compliments on the unimpaired charms of my countenance. Oh my God! I could have looked him dead, and I only wanted the power of a basilisk to have done it on the spot.

I think I never spent so many miserable hours as were crowded into this one day of my life ; every moment presented me with some new cause of complaint—now petrified to the icy paleness of marble, by the unremitting severity of Madam—and now scorched by the fiery blushes that overspread my face at the marked assiduities of Monsieur.—What a change was here ! only a few days ago, and this dear woman loved me with so much fondness, that she counted these hours which separated me from her amongst her infelicities. Alas ! her eyes no longer shone upon me with the mild radiance of friendship—she averted them from me, or if by chance mine happened to encounter them, I could read in their too strong language nothing but the characters of disgust ; and instead of the affectionate regards with which she used to address me, she was either silent, or spoke to me in a manner that forced me to wish she had still remained so. Let us reverse the picture, and we shall see the man who lately considered me with abhorrence now loading me with his much-less desirable attentions, and laying out his whole stock of politeness to purchase my infamy ; in short, they

they seemed to have changed characters, as if for no other purpose than that of torturing a poor defenceless girl, possessed of no other blessings in the bosom of society than her own unblemished virtue, and the friendship of Madam Dubreuil.

I went home in a fit of despair, and stopping at the door of my lodgings looked round, and saw my tormenter ascending the steps, as if to follow me into the house. In no very conciliating tone I demanded to know what could be his business with me, who had parted from him not three minutes before?

“Dear Chevalier,” he replied, “I have business of the utmost importance for your private ear, and you must admit me to an audience.”

“*Must*,” retorted I, spirited enough to answer to my assumed disguise, and to keep it up as long as I could; “*must* is a hard word, Monsieur, and requires some translation: I am going to consult my pillow, and, if I cannot find out the meaning of your

word, perhaps to-morrow I may have the honour to require an explanation of it from yourself."

"Charming!" said he, ironically; "but my dear adorable hypocrite, your good Recluse of the forest should have taught you that the weapons of beauty, like yours, are a thousand times more fatal to mankind than any others with which you could possibly threaten me." Hearing him speak thus, my courage was humbled to the dust—I uttered a loud cry—rushed into the house—shut the door after me, and, having secured it on the inside, flew to my chamber, more than half distracted with the variety of apprehensions that at once assailed me.

All that night I did not take off my clothes, or lay my disturbed head on the pillow of repose; instead of giving it so much indulgence, I augmented its confusion by introducing a thousand fantasies, which by their entrances and exits jostled and expelled each other; at last I selected from the rest one idea—gave myself up entirely to its influence—discarded those which appeared unreasonable

reasonable—and suffered my new ally to dictate for me the following lines, which early the next morning I dispatched to Madam Dubreuil.

BILLET.

“ I am betrayed! and is it—can it be possible, that she who has betrayed me should be Madam Dubreuil—that Madam Dubreuil, who has treated me as her child, as her sister—on whose protection I threw myself—to whom I have had no reserves—to whom I have opened my heart as I would unveil it to the eyes of Heaven—the only friend of my sex—the only guide of my inexperience! Tell me, Madam! for the love of God tell me! can all this be possible?—and have you really told to your husband how I have disfigured myself? Have you displayed to his sight the whole tissue of my melancholy fortune? Have you pronounced to him that sacred name, which has so often in your presence drawn from my eyes the purest streams of tender retrospection? Great God!

why

why do I ask if Madam Dubreuil has done this?—Is there another person in the world with whom I have entrusted my confidence? And has not Monsieur this very evening followed me to the door of my own house to upbraid, to insult, to announce to me the preserver of my life in the forest of Ardennes. Your Recluse (said he)—but I have not patience to tell you what he said. It is not by him, it is by yourself that my thoughts are occupied. Ah! if you could see, you would pity me. Come then, or at least write to explain this mystery, and tell me for what purpose it is that you cast me from your protection, which is honourable, to throw me on another which is infamous. Adieu, Madam! I can make no decision till I hear from you!

“ ROSALIE.”

The messenger who conveyed my billet to Madam Dubreuil did not make me die of impatience for his return; he came back in half an hour, and this was the answer she sent me.

BILLET.

BILLET.

“ I did not know, Mademoiselle, when I had the honour of your acquaintance, that, instead of entertaining a little uninformed forester, I had the felicity to receive under my patronage one of the very first actresses in this or any other country; and if I have not done sufficient homage to your great talents, you have only to blame your own diffidence in hiding them so long from my observation. Your letter puts me in mind of a good tragedy better murdered; such as we sometimes give ourselves the pleasure of attending in a barn or out-shed; where, instead of crying with the author, we laugh at the performance: just such, indeed, is the effect your tragic complaints have produced on my risibility. I have laughed—yes, I have laughed very heartily, Mademoiselle, at your excellent representation of sentiments you never felt, and of terrors you never experienced. I may not be quite so wise as yourself; yet do you really take me for an idiot, that can never be made to understand but by dint of correction

correction and abuse? Indeed I have long learnt my lesson of wisdom—I have acquired it to perfection, ever since you shut yourself up from me to receive the visits of my husband. I admire your address—I admire the choice you have made of a protector—in truth, I admire you altogether. Yet, most of all, I am fascinated with admiration by the excelling management with which you have revealed your true situation to Monsieur, and afterwards contrived to lay the burden of having disclosed your secret on my shoulders. I have written, I think, to you as many lines as I received from you, of course I owe you nothing, but my good wishes, for all manner of such happiness as you are fitted to enjoy, either with my husband, or the husband of any other woman who may hereafter have the honour of being distinguished by your favour,

“M. DUBREUIL.”

In the act of re-reading this letter, which I deluged with my tears, Monsieur Dubreuil came in and surprised me; I had given particular orders for his exclusion, but he possessed

essed a master key, that the fidelity of servants is unable to resist, and the principles of mine were too elastic not to bend at the touch of a metal, the power of which is almost universal; so that when I least expected to see him, he stood before me—without perceiving him near me, I exclaimed, “Horrible man! detestable Dubreuil! friendship has not betrayed her trust; by what infernal magic then art thou in possession of a secret so dear to me?”

“Is it on the happy Dubreuil,” said he. I started. “Is it indeed on me that my adorable girl meditates in the solitary moments of reflection?”

“How dare you,” cried I, inflamed with rage, “how dare you, Sir, add insult to cruelty! You have broken my heart—you have robbed me of a friend, dearer than life—you have lost me the esteem of Madam Dubreuil—you break into my house like a thief—you rob me of my thoughts, and convert them to your own advantage.—Yes, I was thinking of you, I was speaking of you—but your eyes must have informed you, that, in pronouncing

pronouncing your name, I treated it with no more respect than it deserves. I called you horrible! detestable! I will call you so as long as I live, if you do not instantly tell me who informed you of the Recluse of the forest, and of my condition."

"It was yourself, fair creature," he replied, "from whom I received my instructions. I have assured my wife, that I am alone indebted to you for a relation of your charming adventures, and she has the presumption to be jealous of the confidence with which you have honoured me."

My astonishment was so great at finding to what amazing lengths he had stretched his assurance, that unable to utter, and forgetting I must no longer play the hero, I flew to my sword to chastise his insolence—when snatching it from my hand, he forced me into a chair, and, kneeling at my feet besought me to pardon a little innocent gaiety which he had merely indulged to revenge on his wife and me the mortal pangs we had inflicted on him, by presenting him in myself a supposi-
tious

tious rival, so alarming, so seducing, so dangerous.

This was giving a turn to his conduct, so ingenuous—so full of what is called retaliation—that more ready to condemn myself for having misjudged his motive, than longer to accuse him of harbouring any that were baneful to my honour, I readily pronounced his forgiveness—felt a lively hope that he would now certainly reconcile me to the good opinion of Madam Dubreuil—made him quit his humble posture, and listened with avidity, whilst to my entreaties he very well accounted for what had appeared to me inexplicable, that I should have been to him the narrator of my own adventures; I have already related the manner in which he concealed himself, and shall have no occasion, from the scarcity of matter, to clog my memoirs with repetitions.

“ Well, Sir,” said I, “ I do pardon the little stratagem you have used to alarm me. I forgive it with all my heart; but now that you are instructed of the delicacy due to my sex, I pray you to believe I have never committed

mitted any action by which it could be tarnished; and, by making the same confession to Madam Dubreuil that you have done to me, restore me to that friendship she has, at your instigation, withdrawn from me—remove her scruples—banish her uneasiness—assure her that I shall accept your friendship, but never envy her the possession of your heart.”

“ I am then,” said he, sighing, “ to be the only loser by this fine compact you have been proposing?”

“ No one has a loss to complain of,” I replied; “ it is I who have been the only sufferer by your too serious jesting; but bring back to me the love of Madam Dubreuil, and even I shall be satisfied.”

“ I will do so, on certain conditions.”

“ And what are these conditions?” I asked very innocently.

“ That whilst you accept the love of my
wife,

wife, you shall make over to the most adoring of lovers the whole stock of your own."

"Lovers!" cried I, looking him into confusion; "what lovers are you speaking of?—In whose favour is it that you plead with so much energy?—Has any one of your friends, assisted by the lights you carry, penetrated into my disguise? and does he pay me the compliment of wishing to unite his destiny with mine?"

"Wilful misapprehension!" he replied, peevishly; and indeed he was right, for I understood his meaning but too well.

"Let me know the name of this friend?" continued I; "for I am no coquette, and will not keep him a moment in suspense."

"Divine Angel!" he cried, "that passionate lover is myself."

"You!" said I, pretending a surprise I did not feel; "you my lover! the husband of Madam Dubreuil!—You are now carrying your jest too far, Monsieur; the honour

of a man, the peace of one woman, and the virtue of another, are subjects much too serious for this sort for irony."

I shall not rehearse any more of this odious conversation. He soon forced me to understand him—he dared to affront me with offers of splendid disgrace; he did more, he swore my accepting his proposals were the only terms on which he would undeceive his wife, restore her to my friendship, and keep my secret.

As he threatened me with vengeance, there was a something in his expression so terribly determined, as made me see I had little to expect from a change in his sentiments either of rage or love. A fortunate thought presented itself to me at a moment the most difficult, and instructed me how I might prevent the disagreeable effects of either... I made as if I listened to him with rather more patience than I had done before, and, when on his knees he pressed me for a favourable answer, I told him if he would return on the morrow I would, in the mean time,

time, make up my resolution, and he should know the result.

This small artifice succeeded to my wish. He blessed me for what he was pleased to call my condescension, and left me in all the ecstasies of a transported mad man. No sooner was he gone than I sent for Madam Dubreuil's confessor, the same who I have told you had given me baptism, to him I revealed my situation, and besought him to attend the next morning in a closet, where I would conceal him to convince himself, by the conversation that should pass between me and Monsieur Dubreuil, I had not imposed on him a misrepresentation of facts; beseeching him that he would immediately afterwards wait on my friend—release her from the error she had imbibed respecting my conduct—to return her thanks for all the goodness she had shewn me—to intreat her pardon for the troubles I had innocently occasioned her—to tell her that I was going to retire from Lisle; and, last of all, I solicited that he would bring me her forgiveness and her adieus, if by one single line only, written with her own hand, which I

should always wear next my heart as a pledge of that affection I had not deserved to forfeit.

The good priest marvelled at the wonders I revealed to him: he crossed himself over and over; gave his sanction to my passion, and strengthened the resolution I had taken up in regard to my future behaviour; in fine, he promised every thing I required from him, and punctually performed what he had promised.

Monsieur Dubreuil came early the next morning to my house, but not before we were prepared for his reception. My witness was safe lodged in his hiding place, so that I was quite at my ease, having nothing to fear from my visitor, or the consequences of his visit.

I put on an air the most unconcerned imaginable, and got up to receive him with as little embarrassment as I had been used to do in the early part of our acquaintance.

“ Ah! ”

“ Ah ! ” cried he, in a voice of transport, “ how beautiful are these smiles—how well they become you!—they speak to me of my destiny, and they tell me it will be glorious ! ”

“ You forget to whom you are talking,” said I, “ or else you have lost your senses.”

“ Very likely,” he replied, “ and it is you who banish them from me. . . . Heavens ! ” added he, “ with how much ardour I adore you ! ”

“ Now,” said I, “ you are more incomprehensible than ever, and if I was inclined to give you a serious reply, it must be. . . leave the woman you have insulted ! ”

“ True to thy sex ! ” cried he ; “ it was but yesterday you disclaimed coquetry, and to-day you are acting the coquette to perfection. . . . Have you forgot what I proposed to you yesterday ? ”

“ Every tittle of it,” returned I, gaily: —
“ foolish *tête-à-têtes* are better forgotten than remembered.”

“ Perhaps you wish me to repeat the proposals I then made to you,” said he, a little disconcerted.

“ But first,” cried I, interrupting him, “ I want to be informed, once more, of that artful contrivance which has thrown me so much into your power. I have thought of nothing else since I saw you last. Pray did any of your own servants know that you were concealed in the closet when you overheard the narrative I repeated to Madam Dubreuil?” — This part of the accusation brought against me by his wife, that I should have betrayed it to him myself, I was the most anxious to clear up, and, with a little good management, I led him on by a long link of questions till he came to the point, and till I was sure, from the vicinity of the priest, that he must be perfectly convinced of the treacherous proceeding, and that he would also convince his penitent of the trick by which

which this husband of her's had so cruelly imposed on our credulity.

Having satisfied all my demands, the most passionate and most respectful of lovers, as he miscalled himself, began to lay down a plan for the arrangement of our amour, when, again interrupting him, I requested he would not trouble himself to decide on a business of so great moment until we had invited Madam Dubreuil to assist at our consultations. He stared, stammered, and, if I do not mistake, cursed me . . . his wife he did to a certainty.—“Nay,” cried I, “you need not fly out so intemperately; I do not mean to lay a very heavy tax on your patience, I shall seize the first opportunity of speaking to Madam Dubreuil on the subject, and she shall settle our establishment after her own system; in the mean time these doors shall not be opened to a husband who abuses her goodness.”—I said no more, but, taking up my hat and sword very composedly, quitted the room, though I heard him calling after me with much violence,

I walked up and down before my own house till I saw him come out, which he soon did, and, in a great passion, tossing about a little stick he carried in his hand, and muttering to himself. I moved my hat as he passed me; he returned the silent salutation with a made-up face, that, at any other time, would have terrified me, accompanied by a threat that I should be punished for my caprice, or he would perish in the attempt. Knowing I should soon be removed from his reach, I smiled at his look as well as his menace, turned into my house, had another conference with my friendly priest, and saw him leave me to go in pursuit of Madam Dubreuil.

In less than an hour I had the pleasure to see him re-enter my apartment. I asked eagerly what news he brought me from the dearest of my friends; but before he could answer she rushed into the apartment, flew to my arms, strained me to her heart, and wetted my face with her tears: for my part, I was so affected by symptoms so strongly expressive of the most perfect reconciliation, that

that I could only cover her hands with my kisses, and gaze upon her countenance with emotions of joy for which there is no name.

When we had a little recovered from the eloquent silence imposed on us by the strength of our feelings, mutually given and received the pardon of each other for faults involuntarily committed, Madam Dubreuil gently chid me for the message I had sent her of my intentions to leave Lisle, and it was with difficulty, though assisted by the arguments of her confessor, for whom she had the greatest deference, that I could make her see the utility, the necessity, of my absence, not only to avoid the resentment of her husband, but to withdraw from his sight an object which already had interfered too much between her and happiness. At last she confessed that, with all his faults, she loved him well enough to make this painful sacrifice to her hopes of recalling his affections; and, with a thousand vows of eternal remembrance, together with as many embraces moistened by tears innumerable, we separated. That same night I discharged my debts at Lisle, and the next morning set out for Mechlin.

On

On my arrival at that place I inquired at a handsome hotel for lodgings ; the master of it said he could accommodate me very conveniently, but he spoke in a voice of sadness, and with tears in his eyes. When the dinner I had ordered was set upon the table, I judged, from the groans and sighs of the servants who attended, that the whole family must have been plunged in one general calamity. Hard is the heart which, partially melting at its own woes, refuses to soften at the distresses it does not feel. I know nothing of this selfish philosophy ; I felt interested for these people I had never seen before, and asked the cause of an affliction so general as seemed to reign through the whole house.

I learnt from one of them that the master of the hotel, who was named Vanderman, had lately lost his wife by a very deplorable accident, and that they had not yet any of them recovered from their first shock of surprise and horror. I prayed him to relate the particulars of this terrible disaster : he consented to oblige me. I made him swallow a large glass of wine to render him capable of the task I had put him upon, and he delivered

livered so pathetic a tale, that I shall here give it a place in my memoirs.

The wife of Vanderman, who entirely possessed his affections, had one brother of whom she was dotingly fond. He was a young man of good natural parts, but played his brother-in-law many foolish tricks, for which, from time to time, he had received pardon through the mediation of his sister: yet he still persisted in giving new offence; till at length he could obtain forgiveness on no other condition than that of total exclusion from the family, which terms he was forced to accept, whilst Vanderman seemed glad of an opportunity to forbid him the house, because he did not approve his conduct, neither had he any personal liking for him.

One evening, when Vanderman was from home, the unfortunate youth called privately to see his sister; the still *more* unfortunate Vanderman returned sooner than he intended, and all the terrified wife could do, that he might not perceive the poor proscribed visitor, was to extinguish the candle, giving him,

him, by this means, a moment of darkness to hide himself under the table near which she was sitting, thinking, no doubt, that her husband would go out to rekindle the light, and her brother in the mean while make his escape unobserved. How weak, how impolitic, and sometimes how fatal, are, what we are too apt to call, innocent deceptions, when, in fact, nothing that is deceitful can be innocent. In this particular instance how much better would it have been, had the poor creature at once avowed to her husband an offence for which Nature itself was accountable, than by trying to conceal what she had done so authorised, instead of receiving a short reprimand, to subject herself, her husband, and her brother, to the severest of evils. These reflections presented themselves to my mind — my mind gave them to my pen, and my pen gives them to the reader...that pen which would rather trace any other subject than the dark one on which it is about to enter,

The brother of this ill-starred woman having placed himself in a posture extremely uneasy, gently moved to change his position, but

but not so softly as to prevent a little noise from alarming the husband, who, supposing it proceeded from some thief concealed with no better design than to plunder his house, instantly drew a kind of poinard, such as the Flemands are generally armed with, and made several passes directed to the spot from whence the sound had issued. The youth, who, no doubt, felt the extremity of his danger, jumped up, drew his sword, and put himself in an attitude of defence; the wife, throwing her body between them to break the thrust they were making at each other, received two mortal wounds in her own heart from the hands of her husband and her brother—and all this was the work of a moment!

In falling to the ground, the scream she uttered reached the ears of the combatants, and penetrated their souls with horror.—Vanderman raved for lights: lights were brought, and shewed to his aching sight the wife so dear to him pouring out her blood in the icy embraces of Death, and her brother mad with despair.... What a frightful apparition for the eyes of an affectionate husband

husband to contemplate!—He called upon the wretched cause of his rashness for the punishment of his crime—he conjured him with incessant cries to revenge the death of his sister, to pierce him with the sword yet reeking in the blood of his beloved wife; whilst the frantic young man had fallen down at his feet, and was entreating to receive from his hand the favour he solicited from him. At last the dispute of who should die first was terminated by both at once throwing down their arms, and running together to present themselves before the Chief Magistrate, not to accuse each other, but, as self impeachers, separately pleading guilty of a crime intended by neither: all other contest subsided between them, except who should have the happiness of being sentenced to partake of that fate they had administered to an object dearer than their own existence; but who should attend her martyred shade to another world was a point for which they still contended with all the violence of opposition.

The judge, before whom a case so singular was presented, happened to be a man of refined

finest understanding, and infinite humanity—one who heard with attention, saw without prejudice, weighed with precision, and decided with equity. He listened to the pair of miserable penitents, who threw themselves at his feet, not beseeching for mercy, but importuning for death. He considered their offence less a breach of the laws than a misfortune Heaven had directed against their own peace; he saw the punishment of the deed in the consequences it had produced; he adjudged it sufficiently severe, grieved at the pungency of their sufferings, and dismissed them from his tribunal fully pardoned.

The Flemands are remarkably sociable. They love visiting from house to house, and the inhabitants are pretty generally known to each other. Their treats are frequent, and you see the same faces every where; they may be called first-sight lovers, because when a stranger sits down amongst them, before the repast is over, they will avow for him the most perfect friendship. We must not look for substance in shadows, or expect to find much sincerity in these sort of sudden impressions;

impressions ; but there is something so fascinating, even in superficial kindness, that when we have borrowed the garment of candour, and dressed up our image in it, we survey it with pleasure, and are loath to deface its charms by stripping it naked and exposing nothing but cobwebs. The people of this country are also very much inclined to drink beyond all bounds of moderation ; they never assemble together but for the purpose of intoxication in their most serious deliberations ; they have always a plentiful number of bottles before them, which are generally emptied prior to their speaking on the affairs for which they are convened, and it happens, not unfrequently, that by this very arrangement they are forced to separate unable to speak at all.

From the description I have given of these Flemands, it cannot be doubted that I had soon a large acquaintance in Mechlin without the trouble of much cultivation. I hope it is also understood, that I avoided those societies which gave themselves up to a brutal vice, whose only reward is to deface Humanity, dethrone Reason, and set up in
its

its stead a complicated monster of deformity, the attributes of which are made up of Insensibility, Supineness, Riot, Rage, and Madness. I give this picture merely from representation, aided by my own fancy. I have heard the outlines strongly described, my imagination completed the work; but as to the original, I am so fortunate as never to have been in the way of seeing it exemplified—by what means I escaped this misfortune I am going to relate, as it eventually caused me a great deal of vexation, and, at last, threw me into a situation for which the lovers of liberty will have no occasion to envy me.

In order to preserve a sort of equilibrium between my masculine and feminine pretensions, which were always at war with each other, I found it would be absolutely necessary to assume a third appearance, something between both, to settle the different interest so eternally on the jar, and so corrosive to my repose. I had here no Madame Dubreuil to conduct my steps, or shelter me under her protection. Here I found no medium of character: I must either declare my-

self a sot and a rake, or a beau and a lady's man, the only distinctions understood at Mechlin, and, without any hesitation, I made choice of the latter as the best refuge under which I might safely shelter my weakness.

In consequence of this adoption, it was necessary that I should select one lady from the rest, handsome and pleasing enough to give a natural air to my visits, and I fixed upon the beautiful Madame Vandermer for my pretended mistress, to whom I attached myself as much as I could, consistent with my unwearied pursuit of that dear mother, whose image never departed from my heart; though I had no foundation for the sanguine hope, I loved to encourage that, by some chance or other, she would one day be restored to me. To throw myself in the way of this chance, it had always been my custom, since I had left the forest of Ardennes, to dedicate a certain portion of my time in rambling about the country to ask questions, and hear histories. For, whenever I was told a husband and his wife lived miserably together, or that a widow had shut herself
up

up in retirement, I would cry out, "May not this wife, or this widow, be my mother?"—and never could get rid of the idea till I had met with some good-natured gossip, able and willing to undeceive me by relating long stories in which I had no concern; but, though my expectations were always disappointed, my mind was sometimes entertained, and, when one adventure ended, I soon began to inquire for another, believing that other would be more fortunate. This digression has withdrawn me too long from my charming mistress, and I return again to Madame Vandermer.

By this agreeable arrangement with one of my own sex, I not only escaped the importunities of the other to enter into their societies, but had the felicity also of being considered by them in the contemptible light of a milk-sop, and to enjoy the comfort of seeing myself neglected, if not despised, by all the veteran drinkers in Mechlin. A Flemish of my description must not pass two hours in the company of any woman without possessing the most passionate admiration, and, as I constantly spent every afternoon with Ma-

dame Vandermer, the world, as well as the lady, believed me perfectly at her devotion. She was charmed with being the object of my attentions, and neglected no arts to rivet the chains still closer that she imagined had bound me to her.

Some few men there still were who called themselves my friends, and these rallied me on my too-serious engagement, assuring me there was much greater pleasure in drinking with them than in giving up my time to a woman who meant only to deceive me. I declared myself satisfied, and they ceased from giving me any more advice. Though I did not feel for my new acquaintance that glow of sympathy with which my heart at the first interview flew out to exchange sentiments with that of Madame Dubreuil, yet the friendship I could not refuse to her efforts of pleasing me served to fill up the vacuum, once better occupied; but in all the civilities I shewed to Madame Vandermer, I never affected more kindness than I really felt for her, and I thought it ought to have made her contented with me. I soon perceived this was very far from being the case; she
put

put on the manners of a woman, who, by experimental knowledge, is well versed in the natural inconstancy of mankind. She had been a wife, she was now a widow, and seemed to have profitted so much by the advantages of widowhood, that I began to suspect it would not be her own fault if she did not take another husband in lieu of him, whose loss she would yet sometimes lament when she had nothing else to do but to weep and to sigh, which, it must be confessed, was very seldom indeed.

Madame Vandermer had given out to the world, that she was a person of condition—I had my doubts upon the matter, and tried to get at the truth. I took some pains to find out who she really was, her connections, and the place of her birth; but after all my researches I was no better instructed in the archives of her house than at the commencement of our acquaintance. But in those hours we passed alone she gave me some reason to believe that she was one of those French Adventureffes who leave the mountains of Bearn to fish for such dupes as will suffer themselves to be caught by brilliant, but false,

appearances. She had too much sense to speak after this manner; she only incautiously let fall some expressions that made me think it of her.

I have laughed a thousand times on returning home quite burdened with her kindnesses, to think how ill she had bestowed them. Her *penchant* was visible enough, and I saw how much it was augmented by her having taken into her head, that my situation was exalted, and my riches equivalent to my rank.—“ Ah ! ” cried I, “ this is another Madame Vanker ; I am sure she would ruin the peace of any married couple, just as it was performed by that forcerefs on the Count and Countess de ****.”—— I shed a flood of tears at recalling their sorrows to my remembrance, and the comparison I had drawn for my artificial mistress may convince you, that, at the time I made it, I perfectly understood many, if not all, the subtleties of her character ; yet I had no thoughts of withdrawing myself from her house, because, in truth, I did not know another that would answer my purpose so well. I, therefore, went on diligently, learning,

ing from her example, all the arts of my sex; but never with the design of setting myself up at any future period of my life in the same profession; I simply meant to be amused, to shun general observation, and to keep myself quiet, till my destiny, on some occasion or other, should drive me from Mechlin, as it had before driven me from Lisle. Fate was my only director! to whatever place it conducted me, there I determined to take up my residence, till it should summon me to another.

I have been delighted to trace in the really-expressive features of Madame Vandermer the combats that were passing in her ever-busy soul, between her passion for, and her fears of being imposed upon by me; this latter idea was an image of my own creating, therefore charmed me the more on that account, when she adopted it; to say truth, her advances became so rapid, that to give them a damper I frequently threw out distant, but chilling hints, to make her understand that I was treading in the steps of a needy adventurer, who wanted to better his condition by making a rich marriage.

At first she caught at the hook, and betrayed great symptoms of uneasiness; but whether it was owing to my bad acting, or that she was too cunning to be long the victim of arts inferior to her own, I soon saw by the alteration in her temper, and in the renovation of her spirits, that she knew I possessed both money and jewels: I could also discover, that believing me a young man, without a grain of experience, she intended to render me as poor as she had assured herself I was wealthy. To try how far, and in what sort of manner, she intended to carry on her systematic plans of seduction, I tried to awaken those attentions which had lain dormant, when they ceased to discover one good quality of the mind on which they could bestow themselves. It was a most unlucky curiosity, and I woefully paid for the experiment.

Madam Vandermer, who carefully watched every turn of my countenance, mistaking (not from a deficiency in penetration, but from abundance of vanity), for reality, what was only counterfeit, received my renewed civilities with transports, and returned them with

with interest: she wished me to understand that she was inspired by the tender passion, and to believe that I only had inspired it; thus we went on for more than two months deceiving and deceived by each other—my little attentions in full vegetation—her pretended affection hourly increasing—at last, to give me an indisputable proof of its fervency, she intreated that I would make one of her family.

“ Ah!” cried she, laying her hand upon mine, as if by accident, “ I love you so well, that if I could help it, I would never lose sight of you. These short absences, which do not appear tedious to you, are to me a punishment for all my sins, if I had ever been capable of committing any.”

“ Heavens!” I exclaimed, “ how deserving you must be of even more respect than I am able to feel for you. What a pattern of perfection!”

“ Ah! flatterer!” replied she, “ perhaps you blame me, notwithstanding your fine speeches, for letting you see into the very
bottom

bottom of my heart ; but remember, I tell you, that I have not yet shewn half the power you possess over it.—No ! my tongue has not been so foolish to declare that it is only you who have rendered me sensible—that it is only yourself who have snatched me from that freedom which has been the chiefest of my felicities. Ah ! doubtless you are inconstant, like the rest of your sex, and having deprived me of the soft indifference I possessed, you mean to forsake one, who, in spite of all forms, dares to tell you that she loves.”

“ Fear it not,” cried I, laughing ; “ I shall always love you as much as I do at the present moment.”

“ Why then,” she said, “ do you treat a serious passion with so much levity ? if you would have me believe you sincere, you must agree to my proposals ; or if you will not live in my house, there is one vacant at my door ; hire that immediately, and let me at least have you for my neighbour, that, when I am deprived of seeing you, my emotions may be less insupportable, by knowing you are still near me.”

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Had I supposed her sincere, and conceived that she had really taken a liking to my person, I should have pitied her with all my heart; as it was, thinking her worthy of no better sentiment than contempt, I resolved to divert myself a little longer with her extravagant hypocrisy. Ah! how different are the symptoms of a real and mock passion—the modest blushes of artless tenderness—the mild complacency that at once seeks, yet shuns the ardent gaze of affection from the eyes of an object loving and beloved—the suppressed sigh which, in spite of restraint, will escape to express the heart's hidden secret.—These signs are never to be mistaken for the artificial pretences of interest or cunning.

Such were the reflections that made friends of me and conscience for the part I had taken, so that Madame Vandermer and I went on as usual, she trying to make me speak out, and I as industriously evading any direct conversation that could give her cause to say I ever wilfully imposed upon her senses. She made me go with her to church—accompany her on the public walks—in short, she forced me to be her shadow wherever she went.

My

My manner of loving became the admiration of Mechlin—no body was envied by the ladies so much as the handsome widow, and they proposed me as a model to all the men of their acquaintance; but they not chusing to profit by it, still retained for their bottle their ancient partiality, and for the ladies their long-accustomed indifference, a conduct, which gave great displeasure through every female circle, and drew on the transgressing culprits a thousand reproaches for wanting my spirit and my gallantry.

—Madame Vandermer did not allow me the gratification of triumphing over many rivals, for to her plans on my liberty did she nobly sacrifice all the glorious advantages of coquetry—an honest man of the town believing me seriously attached, gave himself the trouble of telling me in friendship to take care of what I was doing: “That woman,” said he, “has been known here about two years; and on her arrival she took a Flemish name, which certainly does not belong to her; several young men have been her dupes already, and I fear you will add to the number.”

I thanked

I thanked him for his information—assured him there was no danger on my account—and continued going on in my old track. It must be confessed that the arts of this woman were beyond all example; as yet her views were not levelled at a part of my fortune, but fixed on the whole: she made no demands on my purse, because, assured of my person, and this disinterestedness might have thrown me off my guard, had I been a man, and a man of infinite credulity; but being neither the one nor the other, these fine tricks only heightened the disgust I felt for her character; at last, my patience, worn thread-bare, would hold together no longer, and I took the resolution of withdrawing from her as gently as I could. To accomplish this, I informed her my parents would absolutely have me return to them. She heard me say that my duty did not suffer me to dispute their commands, and that I should certainly go back with the express they had sent to fetch me. She heard all this with outward and visible signs of despair—showers of tears fell from her fair eyes, but they fell unmingled with complaints or reproaches: she acted

acted her part so well, as to seem enveloped in nothing but tenderness.

Taking up my game, and playing it even with more skill than her own, "Ah!" cried she; "with what a double misfortune are we threatened—I will, I must tell you all—and then think! O think! for God's sake! if no method can be found to evade a separation, that must otherwise be eternal."

I said before that I have a great deal of curiosity, and willing to know what pretty tale she had invented to work upon my passions, I threw out my line of flattery, and played it so well, by pretending to share in her sorrows, that at last her sobs and her sighs, which were perfectly obedient, fell into repose; permitting her, without interruption, to utter her fine-woven web of fly-catching contrivance.

"I am, it is true," continued she, "mistress of some riches bequeathed me by my husband; and the sum he left me is neither contemptible nor trifling, but the chief of my dependance is placed on an old uncle, who
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is made up of wealth: he has often written to me on the subject of a second marriage; till I saw you, I gave as absolute a negative to his proposals as was consistent with my state of expectation from his bounty; but since you came to Mechlin my refusals to take another husband have grown weaker and weaker; the display of my sensibility on *one* occasion has given him such a supposed advantage over me, that he cruelly exerts his power, by not only ordering me to marry immediately, but commanding me to unite my fate with what he calls a very worthy man of his own choosing. Alas! I know this worthy man—no matter what he deserves, for whether man or monster, he would *now* have an equal chance of an election in his favour.”

“I wonder,” replied I, “that you torment yourself in this manner; your uncle cannot force you to marry against your inclination.”

“How unfeelingly you speak of my misfortunes,” she replied, piqued at my coldness; “know, Sir, that my uncle is absolute

lute in whatever project he is pleased to form—and (hesitating) I see but one way by which I may escape the dreaded evil.”

“ Answer to his unjust commands,” said I; “ that you prize your liberty more than riches—that you are sufficiently independent by the bounty of your husband, and that you are determined to make no new engagements without the consent of your heart.”

“ You love me very little,” returned she, taking my hand, and looking tenderly in my face; “ Ah! if your heart beat responsive to mine, you would do as I desired you would; find out a way of securing me to yourself—let me go with you to your parents—let me write to my uncle that I am already married; he may at first resent, but his anger will soon abate, and we shall to a certainty at last possess his fortune: however, by taking this step we run no risk of a separation—feel but as I do, and you will rejoice at this opportunity of uniting our destiny.”

A proposition so plain, that it could not be tortured into any other shape than its own,
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made me tremble and turn pale—she saw my confusion without guessing from whence it arose, and entreated me with great gentleness to speak, that she might no longer be exposed to a thousand nameless anxieties.

“ Well then, Madame,” said I, taking courage, “ since you command it, I will unbosom myself to you, and honestly avow, that what you require of me is not in my power to grant—a fatal promise binds me never to marry—never to be the husband of any woman upon earth, however lovely her person, however captivating her manners—witness to the truth of these vows, when they force me to reject the happiness you hold out to my acceptance.”

“ These vows are mighty unreasonable, I think,” looking at me with displeasure; “ pray, Sir, if you are so conscientious, I should be glad to hear you explain why it is that you have taken so much trouble to gain my affections?”

“ I never, Madame, solicited your love; I only aspired to your friendship—I assure
VOL. I. P you,

you, upon my honour, I am now, and shall always remain, as much your lover to the day of my death, as I have ever been at any one period since I have had the honour of being distinguished by the most beautiful woman in Mechlin."

"Pray do not proceed," cried she, bursting with vexation; "you have said too much already; I perfectly understand that you have loved me only to amuse your caprice, meanly profiting by the folly I have declared to you: but know, Sir, that I have also more virtue than love—that nothing shall ever make me resign that virtue.—No! never will I renounce it, though I should die in tearing your image from my heart."

"Now," exclaimed I, "now I see you in a new light; your face glowing in the radiance of wisdom and virtue—Heaven forbid that I should entertain a wish to tarnish the immaculate purity of your fame!—No, Madame; assure yourself I am not abandoned to selfish gratifications at the expence of your destruction; the sort of love I entertain for you will never lessen—let us then continue to
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love,

love, as we have hitherto loved each other; and though whole countries should divide our persons, our minds will remain in the same state."

As I pronounced my speech with a good deal of languishment, it gave her hope that she might still make something of me, and she broke out into the most flaming expression:—"Ah! let me at least have the consolation of believing you do not love me," cried she; "make me certain of this truth; my repose hangs upon the idea—Are you determined to remember me, when whole countries may divide us?—Would you, barbarous as you are, would you constrain me to adore you in the very arms of that husband to whom my uncle devotes me?—No, No, No! the hope of being indifferent to you is the only one I dare to cherish in my bursting bosom—bursting with sentiment.—Ah!" clasping her hands together, "ah, why—why would you consign me to such a state of misery?"

"My presence, Madame," said I, calmly, "afflicts you—I must retire myself, to

restore you to that tranquillity, of which I have innocently deprived you." Speechless with rage, breathless with disappointment, I seized on the moment of her total inactivity to rush out of the room, bidding her a last adieu, and ravished to find an opportunity of quitting a situation that was become embarrassing beyond my abilities to support.

On the morrow of this memorable evening I removed to a more distant part of the town, where I ceased to think any more of my would-be mistress, and to find myself employment, engaged all sorts of masters to attend; me music, drawing, with a little of mathematics, filled up my hours, much more to my satisfaction than any I had passed since my residence at Mechlin: we were now in the middle of winter, and I waited for spring with impatience; for it was then that I intended to visit the other towns in Flanders, though Madame Vandermer thought proper to hasten my departure much before the time I had proposed.

Listen to the strangest event that perhaps
ever

ever happened in any female memoirs, for such a one am I now going to relate.

Two whole months I lived happily in my quiet lodgings, without pretending to love, and without being beloved; because in all that time I had never heard from or seen the gentle creature, who bestowed so much trouble upon me to so little purpose. One day as I sat alone at my studies, a knocking at the door surprised me; as I was not accustomed to receive visitors, I went to open it myself, when a large tall man, of a terrible aspect, his countenance black, lowering, and scarrified, appeared before me; he held in his broad boney hand a sword preposterously long, which he seemed to flourish about in great anger.

“ I looked up to my hectoring gentleman with as little fear, I believe, as the rosy-cheeked David contemplated the giant of Garth, and without hesitation asked what was his business with me. He returned my look of meek defiance with another all made up of fierceness; to which his high three-cornered hat lent additional ferocity, and re-

plied to my question in a growling tone, by asking me another. It was this :—"What did I take Madame Vandermer for?"

"A very honest person," cried I; "with whom I have nothing to do."

"Ho! ho! that we shall see by and by," said he, raising his boisterous voice into a perfect storm; "learn, Monsieur, that you do not with impunity dishonour a young lady of quality like her.—See before you her brother!"

"You mean her father," replied I; "you are certainly mocking me when you call yourself her brother."

"I mocking with school-boys!—not at all—the subject of my sister's wrongs is no jest, and I shall *make* you marry her, or know the reason why!"

"I espouse Madame Vandermer!" ready to laugh at his blustering.

"Yes, you espouse her! you who have
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so often sworn to make her your wife—and by thy faithless vows tarnished her honour—disgraced her family—and reduced her to this condition. I swear by Mars thou shalt either fulfil thy vows to her, or fight with me.”

“Mister, her brother, hear what I have to say—I will not marry any woman; and I defy you, or your sister, to shew that I ever promised her marriage.” As I spoke this spirited language in a tone as spirited, he began in his turn to exhibit a little more of the man, and a little less of the monster.

“Truly,” said he, “my sister’s case is a very hard one. Ah, Monsieur! this charming woman is in one of the most happy, yet unfortunate situations—you too are on the point of being a father, think of that—think of that, young man, and congratulate yourself that the deserted mother of your infant is yet willing to pardon you, and to unite her fortune with your’s.”

Thunder-struck at a denunciation so unexpected, I could not readily think on what sort of answer I should return this champion

of virtue; but I need not have given myself trouble to frame a reply, which the brave man would not have furnished me with time to deliver.

“ Yes!” cried he, laying hold of my button; “ she will make you master of her person and riches, though you have so cruelly forsaken her: thank God then for your good fortune—marry Madame Vandermer, otherwise my sword shall not be useless.”

“ Very well,” replied I; “ we shall soon see if your courage is equal to your insolence.” As an epilogue to my speech, I snatched the sword from his hand, and gave him a blow with all my force. “ We cannot,” said I, “ fight in a room—follow me.” I threw open the door—we went together a little out of the way—we fought—and I gave him a coup, which felled him to the ground: on perceiving what I had done, I took to my heels, but before I could make my escape some people, who watched us at a distance, set up a cry—pursued—overtook—and, in spite of my resistance, made me their prisoner.

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The next situation in which you find me, was standing in the presence of my judge, before whom the rabble had dragged me with merciless impetuosity, but no great mischief being done by my sword, and the quarrel with my adversary supposed to have arisen from the common cause of some trifling misunderstanding between us, the judge, on my giving security, was going to discharge me, when Madame Vandermer, who had learned the ill success of her champion, sent to inform the magistrate I was nothing better than an impostor—one who had seduced her from the paths of virtue, under a thousand promises of marriage, and the father of an infant, to whom she should soon give life—that though I had cruelly abandoned her in a situation so critical, when all my cares and attentions were necessary to her recovery, yet her love predominated over her resentment, and she was willing still to accept my hand, if I would come and make her the tender of it.

The judge, in a tone of severity, now asked me what I had to say for myself, and whether I was inclined to profit by the lady's
partiality

partiality in my favour, which alone could entitle me to any expectation of mercy from the offended laws of the country ?

The first part of this interrogation I answered, by pleading innocent of the whole charge laid against me, and to the second begged to decline any sort of mercy that must flow through so polluted a channel. The magistrate shook his head, and Madame had told her tale so artfully, that, notwithstanding all I could say to prove the accusation founded in malice, I was ordered into confinement till I should be more disposed to render her the justice she demanded. I blush to call the place of my confinement a prison; but so it was, and my keepers had it in charge to take care that I did not elope from them.

Whether we live in a desert or a paradise, in a palace or a prison, it matters little to a mind at peace with itself: guilt will still be miserable, though breathing the perfumes of Arabia, and strutting in the courts of princes; but Innocence, like a good-contented housewife, if shut up between four
bare

bare walls, will find sufficient and pleasing employment enough to convert her prison of pain into a palace of ease. I speak from experience. I was not unhappy, though the room I occupied was hardly eight feet wide; but I had the indulgence of being shut up by myself, and this added very much to my sources of comfort.

I had been many days under restraint when some officers of Justice came to conduct me to the house of Madame Vandermer, who, I was informed, had produced the little creature of whom I was the supposed father. These men also told me, that, in the midst of agonies the most excruciating, she continued to hold me up as the betrayer of her chastity, and the parent of her child, which, say they, is proof enough to make you marry the mother, or force you to give her down a large sum of money: one of these damages you must pay for your trespass; the laws condemn you, and it will be useless to resist them.—“I know full well,” said I, “how little is to be gained by resistance, or trust me I would not go quietly with you to the house whither you are leading me.”

Estimate

Estimate, if you can, the astonishing impudence of this woman, who, the moment I shewed myself in her chamber, and was thrust by my conductors close to the side of her bed, accosted me with an air the most theatrical, expanding her white arms as if ready to embrace me, and cried out, in a transport of tenderness, “Are you come at last, dear Author of my misery?—are you come to solace my eyes with the joy of once more beholding you?—Ah! in spite of your cruelty you find me unchanged—the same Vandermer that loves you so tenderly—that ill-fated mistress, who, to satisfy you, has plunged herself into afflictions!... Look upon me—see the state to which you have reduced me.... let Prudence give place to Affection—Error to Penitence—receive my pardon, and let me be, if possible, a thousand times dearer to you than ever!”

“Woman!” said I, as she paused to recruit her breath, “or rather let me call thee the disgrace of womanhood, wouldst thou really drag me down to thy own level—wouldst thou persuade those honest people,
who

who come to witness our conversation, that I am the partner of thy crimes."

She interrupted me;—"And is it really possible then that I should have loved a traitor! . . . worse than a traitor—who deceived, deserted, denied me, and would impose it on the world that I only am to blame—that I only am the impostor."

"Support this effrontery," I replied calmly, "for, in the absence of Honour, Modesty, and Decency, there is no other stay to which you can adhere with security."

"Consummate impudence!" she screamed out; "you deny then that you are the father of my child?"

"Most assuredly—and call upon the Majesty of Heaven to witness the truth of my assertion!"—Here the commissioner who came with me thought proper to interfere, and, with authority, commanded that our dispute should go no further, as this sort of passionate recrimination would only put our reconciliation at a still greater distance; adding,

ding, that I must return to prison; that the lady had fully established her claims on my person, or my purse, and by the sacrifice of one or the other she should receive restitution.

“Yes!” cried I, smiling contemptuously as I quitted the room, “you say very true, Monsieur Commissioner, she has established her claim, but on a foundation of such consummate assurance, that, if it should happen to fall by force of its own weight, it will crush her to atoms, and you may not escape the mischief.”

On returning to my lock-up apartment many of the gentlemen with whom I was acquainted sent in their names, and entreated admission. I would rather have been without their company, but politeness forced me to accept their visit: in the same breath they condoled with, pitied, and accused me; for, in spite of whatever I could say, one and all believed me culpable, that I had first seduced, and afterwards forsaken, Madame Vandermer.—Again and again I would have persuaded them how much my honour had been misrepresented:

represented: their answer was always the same, "was you not with her continually—was you ever an instant from her elbow—did she not boast to her companions of your attachment?... Come, come, we are sorry for you, but you must not think we can discredit our senses—it would be next to a miracle that a young man like you should be wise at all times."

"What would you have me to do, gentlemen?"—I should reply to these often repeated observations; "I have told you the truth, and, if you are not inclined to believe me, that is not my fault, but your own."

To this, as to every thing else, I could say in my defence, they would listen, smile, and shake their heads in the broad language of incredulity; at last they advised me, if I wanted to get rid of so troublesome a business, that I should propose some accommodation, make her a handsome present, and give liberally to the support of the infant—the only means, they said, by which I could procure my enlargement, except one, and to that

that one I seemed to have taken up an invincible abhorrence. I thanked them for their advice, asked for the rest of the day to make my determination, and they left me to my own cogitations.

When alone, I cried out to myself, “ Ah! why am I thus punished for involuntary offences?—Oh! beloved Count de ****, could you look out from your grave, which those hands fenced round so carefully, in the dear forest of Ardennes—could you see the child of your adoption thus environed, thus hunted by human beings, more savage than the wolves who howled on the borders of our desert—could you understand my complaints, would they not throw a sombre gloom over the glories of thy beatified enjoyments! And you too, my second friend, charming Madame Dubreuil, my gentle monitress, my sensible guide, sister of my heart, what would you say, did you behold your poor little Rosalie shut up in a prison?—by whom?—by a monster of her own sex, and for what?” —This last question put an untimely end to my soliloquy. I could not help laughing at an

an adventure which the judge himself would have smiled at had he been instructed in the truth.

I next began to consider seriously what was to be done. The first suggestion that arose to my mind bade me disclose my situation, procure my liberty, and overwhelm Madame Vandermer with confusion; this was opposed by another, which told me the Flemish were a people, who, instead of taking me under their protection, would, if acquainted with my sex, raise scandal upon me, and stain the purity of my fame by their own inventions; at least I should pass for an adventures, and that, of all other odious characters, since I became acquainted with Madame Vandermer, was to me the most odious. Having rejected both these plans, I turned my thoughts to the counsel left with me by the gentlemen who took upon them the office of advisers, and seeing no better way to escape, I set about conquering my repugnance to acknowledge myself a father; the task, though hard, was at last accomplished. I signified my wishes for a compromise, and the next day was reconducted to the presence of the judge,

by whom I was transmitted to the chamber of Madame Vandermer, sentenced to confess my fault, to ask her pardon, to take the child with me, to bring it up as my own, or to pay the mother a thousand crowns ; all which I consented to do, and procured the money for my ransom by the sale of a diamond.

Superbly attended by the judge's retinue, I entered the chamber of Madame Vandermer with a humble, penitent air ; for, as I had undertaken the farce, I was determined to go through with it : yet I must confess it did cost me a great exertion. With folded hands, and down-cast eyes, I approached the side of her bed, and, in presence of a large law assembly, made the concessions required of me ; after which the judge, who had followed to see the execution of his own sentence punctually performed, ordered the child to be brought to me, and I again made a transfer of him to one of my lacquies. I next counted down the thousand crowns, and was going away when somebody observed, that it were better if Madame Vandermer were to retain the infant with an additional

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sum of money, which I gladly advanced, she as gladly accepted, and which restored the poor child to the arms of a parent, of whose authenticity there could be no doubts entertained. A little hurt at this ridiculous freak of my playful destiny, I soon after turned my back upon Mechlin, and took up my residence at Dunkirk, where another unlucky adventure awaited me.

At the hotel where I lodged there lived a young officer in the marine service. I had made a sort of resolution never to form either friendship or acquaintance with any body in the world, unless, from some chance circumstance, I should have reason to hope they may be able to assist me in recovering a lost mother, whom I determined to pursue all the days of my life. Thus indisposed for society, the officer, of whom I am speaking, attracted very little of my notice, though we frequently met together by accident, till led on to examine him with more attention, by the extreme melancholy in which he seemed to wrap himself as in a garment; my heart formed by Nature rather to claim kindred with the unfortunate than the happy, strengthened

thened too in this principle by a certainty that I could never meet my mother, under the description of the latter I began to think it for the interest of my pursuit to form an acquaintance with this forlorn officer, and sometimes I was mad enough to say to myself, who knows but he may be my brother? My father would have killed me—perhaps this too is his son, whom he suffers to languish neglected and distressed. The parent who can act cruelly by one child, may do the same by many.—The whim of a possibility that he might be my brother grew from a pigmy to a giant, and at last took entire possession of my brain. I have only to say, in excuse for my folly, what will be pretty generally acknowledged, that on young minds the weakest reasoning takes the strongest hold.

All my thoughts were now occupied how to bring about an acquaintance with the object of my fanciful impression. It was accomplished with no great difficulty; and, in a short time, we fell into that sort of good understanding as authorised me to demand the cause of his extreme dejection. My heart

heart beat as I asked him the question, for I verily expected to hear him say, that his father had deserted him; guess then at my disappointment, when, in answer to my inquiries, he began his history in these words—
 “I have the most indulgent parents in the world, devoted to each other, fond of their children, and adored by them.”—I am not going to rehearse at large the memoirs of this young man; because, in fact, they contained nothing worth remembering, except when he accounted for the melancholy that oppressed him, which I must not pass over, as I owe this piece of justice to my own conduct, rather chusing to call myself the fool of imagination than the tool of intrigue.

I shall first premise that the young man, who did not want for understanding, soon penetrated into my character, and found that it was only by the concealment of his own he could hope to make me useful in the plans he projected. He therefore put on an appearance, timid, modest, prudent as that to which I owed the preservation of female delicacy, and this was the pretty tale he made up for my entrapment—“A relation,” he

said, "of his mother's had many years ago been forced, by the arbitrary commands of her father, to accept for her husband a man whom her heart detested, who used her so cruelly as to make her apprehensive for her personal safety. I came to this town," pursued he, "at the instigation of my mother, to see what could be done for her unfortunate relative, who is still too handsome and amiable to be made the sacrifice of a tyrant's caprice. The worst of all is, that though the world are open eyed to all his other oddities, he manages so artfully as to gain credit for being one of the very best husband's in Mechlin."

My colour came and went, I drew my breath short, and trembled all over, whilst he was speaking. Methought I had now nothing more to do than to go and throw myself into the arms of my mother. This unhappy lady's case, in being obliged to marry the man she detested, so much resembled the words uttered by my persecuted parent in the forest of Ardennes, that I would scarce permit a doubt to intrude on my romantic idea that my mother and the officer's cousin must
be

be one and the same person. I hid my consternation as well as I could; but eagerly asked, if it was possible that I could get a sight of the person for whom he was so deeply interested, as, upon his account, I felt warmly inclined to assist her with all my powers.

“ I am going to tell you exactly,” he replied, “ what steps I have taken, and how we stand at present. On my first coming hither, I presented myself to the husband as the relation of his wife, ambitious of his friendship, and mutually concerned for the welfare of both; these general civilities, under which I thought it prudent to couch those devours intended only for one party, gained me a pleasant enough reception into his family, and my poor cousin, who wisely keeps her complaints from others, found some relief in confiding her woes to me, by whom they were again transmitted to my mother; but, before she could think of any plan to benefit the poor unfortunate, Monsieur Fremmen, whose suspicions are never asleep, spread a report prejudicial to my honour, pretending to such as would listen to him, and sufficient

there are, God knows, who love scandal well enough to eat it, that I was not the relation but the gallant of his wife. He also turned me rudely out of his house, and has ever since held her in such perfect restraint, that, though I have a letter to deliver into her hands from my mother, except it is by your assistance, I can find no possible mode of conveying it to her."

"Ah!" said I, "did you not say this lady had been married many years?—if so, she must be old enough to be your mother; how then could it be supposed your solitudes for her could be interested?"

"True, very true," he returned; "but if she had been as old as my grandmother it would have been the same thing; though not young, she is still handsome, at least Fremén, by his fits of jealousy, makes one believe he thinks her so. . . such as she is, are you ready to shew yourself her champion?"—"There is nothing I desire more fervently," said I, "and if you will trust me with, Madame, your mother's letter, I shall go this moment to find the means of giving it to her unperceived

ceived by any body."—"We must do nothing rashly," cried he; "before you attempt this service, it will be better that you should get acquainted with Fremén."—I asked how that was to be accomplished.—"I'll tell you presently," said he; "you must know then this senseless blockhead, besides being jealous to an extreme, has another malady, of which I will put you in a way of making your advantage. He thinks himself a great mathematician; his temper is sombre, studious, and stupid. You have given me cause to suppose you are well versed in his favourite science. Go to a garden near the town, where he constantly walks every morning, enter with him into conversation, display your own knowledge; but, above all, flatter his folly—this will gain his confidence: he will invite you to his house; you will then see his wife, give her the letter, and, perhaps, bring away her answer with you."—I would not permit him to waste any more time in explanations, so great was my impatience to see, to hear her speak, and to ask of my heart if this barbarously-treated woman was indeed my adorable parent. I took his direction to the
garden

garden he mentioned, sat out for it immediately, and contrived to throw myself in the way of a man, who, from the description given me of him, I supposed to be Fremén.

“Here is a fine day,” said I, placing myself at his side, walking as he walked, and, like him, turning my eyes to the ground.—

“A very fine one,” he replied.—“It is vastly pleasant,” I continued, “to take the air abroad when the weather is so agreeable.”

“Vastly pleasant, indeed,” was his answer;—

“Particularly,” said I, “in this garden, which must have the precedence over all other places of resort, since it is so often honoured with the presence of Mr. Fremén.”

He started at hearing his name so respectfully announced, and, lifting up his cautious eyes from the earth, he inquired, with a satisfied air, how I came to know him.—“There are but few in this province,” I replied, “ignorant either of your name or merit; where do you suppose I must have lived, my dear Sir, not to have heard of the probity, candour, and profound knowledge in mathematics, by which Monsieur Fremén is justly distinguished above the most learned men of
any

any country under the canopy of Heaven?" "Oh, Sir!" he exclaimed, in a voice of rapture, "indeed, Sir! you speak of me too advantageously!"—"No, Sir!—there, Sir, I desire permission to contradict you... Do I not remark in your air, something so noble, in your eyes something so exalted, in your sentiments something so singular, as, allow me to say, would have fixed my opinion of your wisdom, if I had not before believed every great and good report by which your fame is circulated through the world."

All this time I had been fideling from him as if I meant to keep a respectful distance, which made him say to me, "If you honour me so much, why do you not approach nearer? I meet with few such sensible young men, and shall be glad to cultivate your friendship."—"Ah! now, Monsieur! you make me but too happy... I am a very young man indeed—what an offer to a novice seeking instruction, and after pursuing it through almost every town in Flanders, it is in this garden that chance presents me with the precious jewel of my unwearied researches."—"Doubtless," said he, "you must have seen
many

many wise men in the course of your travels."—"Some, indeed, I have met with, but none so wise as yourself—positively not one."—"You are very modest," said he, "to assume so little on your own account . . . methinks you seem to be fuller of understanding than you are of years; but cherish this modesty, for there is nothing that sets off a great character so much as modesty."—"Alas! Sir," I replied, "I have yet no character to set off, and if I ever should be so fortunate to acquire one, it must be under your protecting auspices—near you I shall learn more than all the schools of pedantry and common philosophy could teach me—let me see you then sometimes, and let me profit by your lights."—"No one has yet rendered me the justice you have done," said my wise man, with the most contented air in the world; "it is your good sense, your powers of distinguishing, that makes me regard you with complacency. . . . Come then to this garden that my goodness has rendered so dear to you—come every day after dinner, I shall meet you here, and bestow on you one half hour in assuaging that thirst after knowledge which I plainly see almost

almost consumes you. Ah! poor child, one little half hour is all the time I can afford thee; so go home, and consider how you may make the most of that little." Ready to expire with laughing, I received my leave of audience—bowed profoundly—and left him to his silent meditations.

On my walk back to the town I fell into a train of reasoning, and this was the substance of my cogitations: should Madame Fremén be in reality my mother, of which I had very little doubt, it followed of course that Monsieur Fremén must also be my father.—“Why then,” said I, “does not my heart acknowledge him?—why is it that I can see in him nothing but absurdities?—why do I laugh at him; and how is it that I dare to make him the butt of my ridicule?”—Nature answered to my inquiries: “the man who could destroy the peace of thy excellent mother—who would have spilt the blood of his own child, is for ever divided from thee: Nature united him to thee—he disunited himself, and, in defiance of my laws, tore asunder those ties fraternal

fraternal—filial—natural—which should for ever have bound thee together.” I was very well satisfied with this solution of Nature, and on my return home found my new friend waiting for me with the greatest impatience.

He asked me to give him an account of my interview with the mathematician—appeared transported at my good success—exhorted me to continue my efforts in favour of his afflicted cousin, and my promises to render her all the services he required, restored him to tranquillity; adding also to his humour a sort of harmless gaiety, extremely diverting. “Ah!” cried he, “how much will my dear mother—how much will our whole family be indebted to you for an interference, which may soften the severe fate of the most amiable woman in the world.”—I took a secret, but large share in the praises he bestowed on Madame Fremén, and could not help saying to myself how exactly this character tallies with the sentiments my dear Recluse entertained of this charming person: he never was deceived—his judgement was without error. I thought that moment of the Countess
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de ****—I thought of Madame Vanker, and sighed to retract my too hasty decision.

On the morrow I did not fail to return to the garden, at the time Monsieur Fremén had appointed to meet me; he was already there; I accosted him with the profoundest respect, and he immediately began speaking to me of astronomy. He railed with virulence against the folly of mankind in general, who, taken up with running about upon the face of the earth, let themselves remain in total ignorance concerning heavenly bodies, as if it were too great a trouble to examine those luminous globes by which they were lighted:—"for my part," said he, "I am perfectly acquainted with them; few husbands know so well what their spouses are about at home when they are abroad, as I know the movements of sun, moon, and stars. The greatest utility of this study I have found to consist in tracing the motions of the sun, and to measure by it, the duration of all things; there is not in the world any one occupation so noble, so generous, so exalted, as the study of sun-dials—the sense of man can hardly attain it to perfection; yet so incorrigibly stupid
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are the swinish inhabitants of this country; that they pretend to say of me, I pass my life in finding out what o'clock it is in other places: you smile, as if you did not believe the truth of what I tell you; but assure yourself, nothing can be more true than what I am saying. I felt glad that he had not discovered I was laughing instead of smiling at his discourse, but I tortured my features into a grin of suppression, which passed off very well. A person is never rightly estimated in his own country," said I; "you have that unjust fate in common with all great men; such philosophers as you are never in so glorious a state of reputation as after they are dead: you say wisely, my young pupil; on this very account I have sometimes, merely from resentment, intended to quit that ungrateful earth, where reigns nothing but ignorance; yet I am attached to it by some ties, which, when I come to the point, will not let me carry these sublime resolutions into effect."—"You are married," cried I, "and doubtless you have a wife, from whom your great soul would be afflicted to separate."—"You are always in the right," he replied. "Yes! I am the husband of a woman, who
would

would be charming in my eyes, if she was less charming in the eyes of the world:—we might have been happy, had our passion been mutual—we have been miserable, because another has possessed her heart—if I was less honest, I should hide these sentiments from you; but they are reasonable, and it is therefore that I make no mystery of them.”

“ Good God ! ” I exclaimed, pretending a great surprise, “ is it possible that a philosopher like you should be touched by so contemptible a malady as jealousy ! rid yourself of it—in compassion to your own glory, shake off the feeble distrust by which that glory would be tarnished ; but, my great and good master, pardon this presumption of mine.”—
 “ Alas ! child,” said he, “ thy wisdom promises in time to equal my own ! I am not angry with thee ; but know that it is not in the chapter of love to take advice, though it has often need of counsel.”

Here was a small ray of sense that sparkled in the midst of his folly ; I examined his countenance with more closeness than I had ever done before, and saw there no *traits* of

that fiery vengeance which must have enveloped the soul of my father, when he would have dragged my mother from the side of her infant. I could trace on the face of my mathematician, instead of violence and murder, nothing but a sort of complacent insipidity, that rendered him by no means an object of terror; and my hopes of being soon restored to my mother were just going to give up the ghost, when they began again to revive on his continuing to speak after this manner:

“The disturbances of my mind are so troublesome to be borne, that I am at last come to a resolution of taking my wife to some uninhabited country, and have actually in my own thoughts fixed upon a desert forest, remote enough from hence, where, if she will but love me, we may be happy without interruption.” I was no longer able to master my feelings, which were wound up to a pitch that burst them, and I cried out—“Surely, surely, you must be speaking of Ardennes—the forest of Ardennes!”—“Excuse me from satisfying your curiosity,” he replied, gravely; “I can tell no man under the sun where it is that I intend to transport my

my wife ; such a confidence might frustrate the whole plan of our retirement." I was forced to be satisfied with this answer—but I asked him another question, the reply to which would reinforce, or put an end to my hopes ; it was, how long he had been married ? and when I heard him say near twenty years, though his wife was still, he declared, the most beautiful woman in the world, I felt such a glow of certainty spread over my heart, that I could not prevent myself from venturing warmly to enter into a sort of vindication of her who I supposed to be my much-injured parent.

" I must acknowledge," said I, " there seems only one opinion throughout the world respecting Madame Fremén, and it would be extraordinary if I were not to adopt it, that her soul is as divine as her body is beautiful."—" So then," interrupted he, " you have heard of my wife before?—what ! and do the world say that she is innocent?" added he, very much agitated.—" As angels," I replied ; " nobody but yourself has ever impeached the immaculate virtue of your lady ; I am also made to believe, that besides beauty

she possesses every accomplishment—every grace of her sex: in short, that she is even worthy of the most sublime—most enlightened husband in the universe.”——“That it is,” cried he, “which vexes me! Now, tell me the truth, was it not some d——d gay young man who told you all these fine things of my spouse?”——“Oh no!” said I, “I do not frequent the company of young men, they are too dissipated for me—I want no whip-syllabub conversation; it is from such as yourself that I seek as well solid entertainment as solid improvement: put up therefore, I beseech you, with my little experience—with my very feeble lights—and teach me things that are useful.”

He paused in a manner that made me suspect I had gone one step too far in my panegyric on Madame Fremén; and I was fully convinced of my error, when, turning to me abruptly, he said, “But notwithstanding your aversion to the company of gay men, you are just at the very age to like the society of women.” To remedy the evil of too great inadvertency, I was now obliged to dose him with a double portion of absurdities.—

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“Your

“Your modesty,” said I, “will not let you understand me—allow me rather to wound your delicacy, than to be misunderstood by you. I must speak plainer, and declare, that I prefer your wisdom to all the fine women upon the face of the earth; I look upon them to be no better than nuisances to people of my description, whose pursuits are so much more serious than their own.”

“Wonderful!” cried he, in a voice of rapture; “Wonderful indeed! happy, but most extraordinary pupil!—O that all young men thought as you do!—It is only such as you who are worthy to be admitted into the houses of husbands, the chastity of whose wives are dear to them, and from this moment I give you my esteem without reserve!”

——“Yes,” said I; “the most suspicious man in the world might receive me under his roof—be that wretch accursed!” and I spoke the sentiments of my heart, which doubtless by giving energy to expressions carried conviction to the mind of Monsieur Fremén; “accursed be that wretch, who enters a family to disturb the repose of its master, by seducing from their rightful owner

the affections of a wife, in whom he places his happiness."

Do you suspect the effect this declaration produced on the mathematician.—No! you will hardly believe that tears started to his eyes—that he hugged me between his arms, and bade me use his house as I would the house of my own father. "I long for you," said he, "to be acquainted with my wife, that you might talk to her after this manner, and convince her by incontestible truths how much it is her duty to adore me."

I durst not look towards him as he spoke, for fear the contemplation of his little mean figure should split the veil of my gravity, and spoil all; so I turned my head downwards, as if oppressed with his goodness, saying, "I should certainly have very great delight in always entertaining Madame Fremmen with the praises and the merits of her incomparable husband."

"That is good," said he; "very good! I cannot stay any longer now; but do not, my dear pupil, fail to dine with me to-morrow;
come

come at noon to that new house you see on your left; it is there I live, and there I will present you to Madame Fremén."

When in the evening I made a repetition of my second visit to the garden, or, more properly speaking, when I related to the young officer the second addition of my adventures there, and told him I was invited to dine the next day with our mathematician, I thought he would never have done thanking me, or rather that he would have gone mad with joy—"Profit," said he, "by the lucky impression you have made on this cruel husband—you will to-morrow behold the relation of my mother—you will be able to convey her letter to this beloved relation!—What a fortunate opportunity! it is now eighteen days since I have seen her—she goes no where—she receives no visits—in all that time I have not so much as heard her spoken of: the very attendant who wished to serve her amiable mistress in so innocent an intercourse with her family, she too is certainly made a prisoner with that much-abused wife, else she would have flown to bring me intelligence of her lady, that I again might have sent it to

my mother, who is all this while torturing under the most terrible suspense for the fate of her friend."

Besides, my own impatience to see Madame Fremén, which was almost ungovernable, I had some pleasure in being the means of carrying on a correspondence between her and her family, whether I should or should not prove to be her daughter; of which, against my inclination, I was sometimes forced to doubt, whenever I re-considered the object to whom she was connected. All that night I could not close my eyes for thinking what the next day might produce. Having charged myself with the young man's letter, which I saw was directed in a female hand, I set out something before the time mentioned to keep my appointment, and was most graciously received by my inviter; but looking round the room could see nothing of the person I most wished to have seen.

"Thank you, thank you," cried the overjoyed mathematician, shaking me by the hand; "thank you for coming so early—you could not be more desirous to see me than I am

am to shew you to my wife: I have spoken to her in your favour—perhaps she will not like you the better, but no matter—never mind it: when she comes down to dinner, speak to her as bold as a lion, and tell her the duty all wives owe their husbands: we shall give you no very good cheer—but no matter—the wisdom of our conversation shall make up for the want of it: in the meantime come along with me into my garden, where I will shew you what, as a scientific man, and my pupil, you must prefer to all the sights in the world.”——See us now in the garden, and hear him continue his discourse: “There, there! look about you!” throwing round his arms, as if he intended to form them into a zone, that he might embrace at one grasp seven fun-dials, which were placed in various shapes, and in every possible direction; “look about you, I say; here are inventions—here are fun-dials for you—here is contemplation for a philosophers—now what think you of the fools that tell me I am of no use to my own country, by regulating the time for others? I see you are struck with astonishment—examine the fruit of my studies as much as you please—admire them as much

as you can—but do not praise my wisdom, my knowledge, my application. I charge you not to flatter me, I cannot bear to be flattered.”——You may be sure I did not transgress this last command; I remained silent, as if transported by the objects he pointed out to me, making me observe figure by figure all the scratches he had indented on the face of his so much worshipped fun-dials.

Next to fun-dials, nothing occupied his affections so much as his wife; and to conquer her indifference for himself had been the tedious employment of twenty years, though by what I could judge, by his own account, he had it all to begin over again. As we walked round from one fun-dial to another, waiting for dinner to be ready, he sometimes talked to me of Madame Fre-men; “I assure you,” said he, “my inquietudes on her account are not unfounded—Do you know,” added he, “that there is a young officer of the marines, a pretended cousin of her’s, who has lately given me a great deal of vexation?”——He would perhaps have added more, but a servant came to tell us his lady expected us, and we returned back into the

the house, where I was destined to see entombed all these delusive hopes I had so fondly cherished. My heart was cold as death to the formal courtesy and uninteresting countenance of Madame Fremén; it did not say to me, this is your mother—It spoke nothing in her favour, and if I had wanted any other evidence to convict me of the error I had entertained, I should have found it in a mighty sensible speech of the philosopher, who observed, rubbing his hands, as we sat down to table, that with such a wife, and such a friend, he only wanted the olive branches to make him the happiest man alive; “but who knows,” said he, “though we have never had a child, that we may be always childless; I have seen stranger things than this happen in the course of my studies.”——“How nonsensically you talk!” said my now no longer supposed mother; “is not the being father of your own fun-dials enough to satisfy your ambition?” Awed into silence on the domestic topic, our poor mathematician began to speak upon politics—abused government—devised means of reform—railed much against luxury—declared it the bane of man’s senses, the destruction of empires; and, as a recompence

pence for the bad dinner to which he had invited me, recommended moderation to all students of philosophy, whether practitioners or learners of the science. He next launched out with still more energy on the subject of women—raved at their extravagance—their love of dress—of play—of gallantry;—pitied the fate of all men, to whom nature had given unfortunately a *penchant* for the sex, and concluded with declaring his admiration of those countries who lock up their wives from the sight of all men.

The patience of his exasperated lady could hold no longer; she burst into tears, threw down her fork on the table, called him inhuman! a barbarian! a monster! worse than either Spaniard or Italian: accused him of a thousand cruelties; but most of all, that not content with driving from her house the only relation to whom she could look up for any mitigations of those sorrows his suspicions engendered, not content with bereaving her of her natural protector, he had for eighteen days presented nothing but his own odious person to her sight; besides making an absolute prisoner of her poor *femme de chambre*,

bre, who was as ill treated, and as innocent as herself. To all these charges the philosopher made so feeble a defence, that, though I did not approve, I was forced to pity her; and thinking the correspondence between two women must be perfectly harmless, I resolved my assistance should not be withheld now or in future to keep it alive. I have no reason to think that she gave any guess at my kind intentions, because she seemed by the severity of her aspect to consider me only as the friend of a husband for whom she entertained no sentiments but those of disgust.

Madame Fremén, though on the shady side of thirty, being a wife at fifteen, contrived by her management to preserve all the appearances that are most interesting in youth, and was still wonderfully handsome: there are women, I believe in all countries, who, without having the least objection to be mothers and grandmothers, are possessed of the like art to make themselves up to rival their daughters and their grand-daughters, if before that time death does not put an end to their exertions.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding Madame Fremén's reserve to me, which lasted all the time we were at dinner, I found an opportunity before we got up from table, unperceived, to deliver my credentials from her relation; and never having spent a day more fatiguing, shortened my visit, intending to call again the next morning to see if she meant to entrust me with her answer: every thing happened according to my expectations, as well as to those of my base employer, who, as you will soon understand, under pretence of serving an unfortunate woman, had the insolence to use me as the pander of his illicit amour.

I met as usual my master in the garden, for so he continued to call himself—poor man, he was any thing but master of arts, for I think, in my life, I never saw folly so totally undisguised; yet I still bore with, flattered, and at last gained so entire an ascendancy over him, that at my remonstrances he began to give his wife more liberty, and, if I am not very much mistaken, she made no good use of her freedom; in expressions of kindness to her husband, she was so much improved, that with tears in his eyes he thanked
me

me for the advice to which he owed an alteration so unhopèd for, and declared himself the most contented of all men; for myself, I was very well satisfied with the part I had taken, because I had a much better opinion of the lady and her cousin than they deserved. On the morrow, after my first interview with Madame Fremèn, the father of sun-dials dragged me from the public garden, where he held his nonsensical lectures, once more to his own house, to make me, he said, the eye-witness to his wife's reformation, which certainly, he observed, must have been the work of inspiration, as he did not hear me address to her more than two sentences on my introductory visit; if the sight of me alone could produce such a change in her sentiments, what wonders may not be expected, when she should have put herself under my instruction, and I had persuaded her of the reverence she owed to his wisdom, as well as the fondness she ought to entertain for his person.

I found, as he told me I should, a very great alteration in the lady on my second visit; she loaded the mathematician with
caresses

caresses—shewed me the most marked civilities—and before I came away slid into my hand a letter, which I soon after conveyed to the officer, who waited for it with great anxiety: I was rather alarmed to see it directed to him, instead of his mother, and could not help saying I hoped he had dealt fairly with me; upon which he returned it to me, desiring I would break the seal, to satisfy my scruples. I did so, and found inclosed a letter, addressed to his mother, with a few lines scratched on the envelope, which I well remember; I insert them to shew that I was not so easy a dupe to their devices as some may imagine—these were the words:

“ SIR,

“ You very much oblige me in sending me such charming news from the friend dearest to me on earth; that friend tells me I am still beloved—that after so long and terrible a separation we shall meet again—pray forward what I send you with all possible haste—I die for an answer: in three days you can certainly procure me one, when I flatter myself your agreeable acquaintance who brought me
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the former, will have the goodness to favour me in the like manner with another."

This billet contained nothing more than the initials of her name, and that supposed to be for the mother was very handsomely sealed, so that though I had began to imbibe suspicions from a certain levity of mind, which the languishing eyes of Madame Fremmen could but ill disguise, I immediately dismissed them on so striking a proof of her honour, and the candour of her cousin: to repair, as I imagined, the injustice done to their intentions, I punished myself by keeping up my correspondence with the philosopher, merely to serve them. I not on'y brought and carried letters, but, as I have said before, obtained for a very abandoned woman more liberty than she knew how to manage with discretion. This sort of self-inflicted penance was at last taken off by the officer's telling me he would no longer tax my friendship—that Madame Fremmen was enjoying, through my goodness, as much freedom as she desired; of course could write to his mother whenever she pleased, without

giving me any further trouble—a dismissal, at which I rejoiced most exceedingly. I then pretended to be going out of town—took leave of my old master, his wife, and his fundials—moved my lodgings to a considerable distance, resolving to embrace perfect solitude; to pursue my studies, my exercises, and to take advantage of all such acquirements as were to be attained in a town like Dunkirk. Thus determined to shut myself out from all society, I took a sham leave of my officer, as well as my master; the former pretended great sorrow at my bidding him adieu, and requested I would give him one of my uniforms, for I had several, but all of the same shape and colour, that he might often contemplate the dress he had so long been used to see me appear in; that in beholding it, if we should never meet again, he might recal the wearer to his recollection with greater exactness. The request was an odd one; I laughed at a whim so singular; but foreseeing no use that could be made of it to my disadvantage, I ordered my servant to leave one of them behind me, to gratify, as I thought, the harmless superstition of a young man who wished me well, but who
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in reality meditated a mischief against me, destructive to my disguise, and almost fatal to my life. It was thus—as soon as this young gallant supposed me really gone from Dunkirk, he took the liberty to robe himself in that very dress which he said was so minutely to remind him of me; and under this appearance he visited the wife of Fremén whenever that great philosopher was engaged abroad in making fun-dials, or any other mathematical invention: his reason for this adoption, as the lady herself afterwards confessed, was, that if in his absence he should hear a man had been received by her, from the nearness of his size with my own, and in the same uniform always worn by me; if any such description should reach him, he might suppose it was myself who had been at his house; in such a case she had also a tale ready to produce of the business that brought me thither, and of the necessity that hurried me away again before he came back.

A plan so dexterously laid down could hardly fail in its effects; the neighbours whispered Monsieur Fremén that his wife let in prohibited company when he was ab-

sent: the poor mathematician raved like a mad man at this intelligence—privately mounted guard on the advances of the incognito, and being deceived by the uniform which had been mine, no sooner saw the gallant steal out of the house, than, rushing into it himself, he stuttered out a demand how I came back to Dunkirk, and how she presumed to receive me clandestinely? She did not deny that it was me whom he had seen; also trying as well as she could to account for my visit; but her excuses were so lame, so incoherent, that they only served to confirm his dishonour, and exasperate him the more; from which time he held certain bravos in pay to seize upon me whenever they saw me coming towards his house; whilst he staid constantly at home, locking up himself and wife in the same room, to wait for my arrival.

I now and then took little excursions on the sea, to get acquainted with that element, on which, at a future period, I intended to make considerable voyages, sometimes failing, when the evening happened to be calm, three or four leagues from the port. One unlucky

lucky night curiosity led me to go on board a vessel lately come into harbour, which made it late before I could regain the shore, and brought it in my way to pass by the philosopher's door; but when arrived within a few paces of it, I found myself roughly laid hold on by several men, who forced me to enter it very much against my inclination, and render a state of indescribable consternation, in spite of all my resistance; the same banditti hustled me into the presence chamber, where sat in furious majesty the great maker of sun-dials, ready to perform the double office of judge and executioner.—

“Traitor!” cried he, whilst his wife sat weeping in a corner; “ah! traitor! is it by a philosopher—by a mathematician—by my own pupil? Is it by thee, hypocrite, that I have been dishonoured?—hold him! hold him tight, that he may not break from you to do me a mischief, whilst I run him through the body.” The men fastened me down—he drew his sword, and ran towards me; when seeing the point of his weapon within an inch of my breast, I gave a loud scream, and cried out, without considering on any other consequence but that of saving my

life . . . “ Spare a woman !—Spare me, I am a woman ! ”——I was but just in time, I felt the steel touch my waistcoat ; nay, even then the declaration might not have secured my safety, if one of my guard, who felt some compassion for my sex, had not turned aside the sword with his hand, and insisted that before I was put to death I should be heard.

I was never less a man, or more a woman, than, in these terrible moments, when fear got the entire ascendancy over that sort of masculine courage, which, from early habits, had hitherto seemed to form a part of my character. Whilst Monsieur Fremén, who gave no credit to the discovery, continued to menace and abuse me, I begged to have my hands released, and to be allowed the liberty of speech. My first request he positively refused ; nor was I, for a long time, more fortunate with the second, because he chose to say every thing himself, was so headstrong, so noisy, so boisterous, that his voice would have drowned a dozen stronger than my own. A man of sense will sometimes listen to reason, but a fool is never to be persuaded.

The

The men now held me more feebly than before, and it was no hard matter for me to escape from them. I put my hand in my pocket, and drew out a letter which the day before I had received from Madame Dubreuil, with whom I kept up a correspondence; the contents of that, I fortunately carried about me, was in answer to one that contained my whole history from the day I arrived at Dunkirk. She said she knew something of Fre-men, who, notwithstanding his many oddities, she believed to be an honest man: she also often spoke very merrily of my disguise, the adventures into which it had drawn me, and, though this letter was directed under my assumed name as well as sex, yet she wrote to me as one woman writes to another, sometimes calling me her dear Rosalie, and sometimes her pretty romantic heroine.

“ Well, Sir,” said I, going up to the still desperate-minded husband, “ however unwilling you are to believe what I tell you, read this letter, and it will force you to do me more justice.” No sooner he examined it, without and within, than the film fell from his eyes; he dismissed the agents of his

bloody purpose, and, falling down at my feet, uttered the most doleful entreaties that I would forgive his rashness, and not publish his shame. I forgave him with all my heart, promised silence, and, perfectly uninterested in whatever may be the fate of his unworthy wife, I hastily quitted the house never to return to it again, as I did also the town of Dunkirk at the earliest dawn of a very pleasant morning.

Sick of Flanders—philosophers—fun-dials—insidious gallants—and meretricious wives, I turned my thoughts towards Paris, which I reached in eight days, and went to lodge in the Fauxbourg St. Germaine. I was at this time near twenty years old, and I hope it has been observed, that, in taking up the habit of a man after my emancipation from the forest of Ardennes, I committed no masculine action that could leave a blush on the cheeks of feminine delicacy; the same causes for which I adopted my disguise still existed for its continuance, and, during the time I had been in the world, I found myself quite unembarrassed by it. My life at Paris passed away as harmless as at other places. I avoided

avoided the company of young men ; I occupied my best moments with serious books, moral or historical, sometimes unbent my mind by turning over the pages of more frivolous compositions ; passed many agreeable hours in parties formed of elegant women, whose refinement was natural, whose wit was sterling, and whose wisdom was more than superficial. As age had now begun to mature my understanding, it would have been strange if, assisted by such charming preceptresses, I had failed to hoard up in my mind many female graces against the time when I should have occasion to display them. Another source from which I drew a great deal of amusement was by frequenting the Comédie Française, where they were then playing the pieces of Pierre Corneille. This illustrious poet had restored to the French Theatre its original perfection, of which, one may say, his own works were the model ; to a certainty his talents were not to be rivalled, or the variety of his ideas equalled, by any other writer ; neither would any one enter into competition with him for the justness of character, the elevation of taste, or the soundness of understanding : in truth, he
may

may be considered as the restorer of tragedy, the relish for which would have fallen into decay with the public, if his luminous genius had not rekindled those embers of famishing taste that were before expiring for want of such food as it could feed on, without loathing. On this account, the public had for him all that respect which the sublimity of his wisdom enforced, and it was to the excellence of his works to which he is indebted for the additional name of *De Grand*. All the great men of his time paid him a sort of involuntary homage—every body read, every body admired, which admiration continues to this day, and the name of Corneille will exist as long as the name of France itself.

I had yet other pursuits besides those I have mentioned, and in none of them did expectation ever forsake me. If my mother still lived, she must be the inhabitant of some country or other, I was as likely to find her in France as in Flanders—this dear expectation was my constant companion: it laid down with me, it got up with me, it followed me every where. To indulge my inquiries as well as curiosity, I visited all that
was

was worth seeing ; I missed no sight of antiquity or magnificence ; every thing remarkable in Paris passed under my observation, and my eyes, so long accustomed to the simplicity of Flemish houses, were struck with wonderful astonishment at the sumptuousness of French buildings ; a thousand objects united to fill my moments with delight : yet, after all, nothing pleased me so much as visiting the villages and villas situated on the borders of the Seine ; but, amongst my various excursions from town, that in which my grateful heart most exulted was in making frequent tours to Nantes, where I remembered to have heard my beloved Recluse say he had once lived. Melancholy yet sweet were the sensations with which I endeavoured to find out the very house once inhabited by that tender friend, whose love, whose goodness, whose wisdom, whose instructions, were all present to my idea. I regretted him as at the moment I lost him ; tears washed my cheeks, sobs burst from my agitated bosom as if some new and terrible misfortune had overtaken me ; I was even surprised at the violence of my own emotions,

tions, and trembled at a discovery which threatened me with so much mischief.—“ Ah ! ” cried I, “ what will become of my repose, since I am capable of such lively resentments ; hitherto I have been exempted from passions ; I believed I never should feel them—I hoped to enjoy always the same soft tranquillity, of which I so well know the value, of which I so much dread the loss, without wishes, without fears, without embarrassments, without dependence ! ”

These exclamations were the expression of a soul just made acquainted with the strength of the passions and its own weakness ; if the bare remembrance of a friendship, however filial, however respectable, could transport me so much beyond the bounds of moderation, to what tumults may not my heart be exposed, if it should ever happen to yield up its liberty, and become the slave of a tender, perhaps unfortunate, attachment.—Never till now had I considered myself in any sort of danger from those passions, which once, in the forest of Ardennes, I had seen so strongly exemplified on the ruffled

fled foul and agitated countenance of Count de ****. — “ If the best, the wisest, the most placid of human beings,” said I, “ felt his fortitude shaken to the foundation by these foes to reason, what resistance shall a feeble girl like me make against the passions, should I ever be forced to contend with them ? ” — From ruminating thus I turned my thoughts to prayer, and never offered up any petition to Heaven more fervently than that I might always preserve my indifference, my peace, and my liberty ; but, notwithstanding all my devotion, Love, who laughed at my reasoning, dished up for me a pretty sort of revenge, which I could not foresee, of course could not evade his stratagem was as much disguised as my own person, and at last he triumphed in my defeat.

Near the house where I lodged lived a young Italian lady, handsome, sensible, and prudent. The respectability of her conduct was the admiration of all Paris : no men were ever seen with her ; she lived very much retired, and never went abroad without being attended by an old *Femme de Chambre*, who she brought with her to France.

Hearing

Hearing her so much spoken of, and always in the highest terms of praise, I felt myself extremely inclined not only to see her, but to feel a friendship for her, such as I experienced for Madame Dubreuil. I spoke to the gentlewoman with whom I lodged on the subject of my wishes; she again, who was on terms of friendship with the old Femme de Chambre, mentioned me to her as a young man, as wise, as sober, and as regular in all respects as her own incomparable mistress, with whom it was my ambition to commence an acquaintance, as my taste for female society was so refined, that I was very nice in my selection, and paid no visits to ladies whose names were not registered in the circle of honour; in short, the chambermaid set me off in such flying colours, that I was invited to the house of this charming Italian, and we soon entertained for each other the most perfect friendship. I felt so much complacency, so great sweetness arise to my mind from this intercourse, that I suddenly dropped all my other visits, neglected my books, discontinued my exercises, and even thought less of my mother. It was Signora Florina who caused these

these revolutions, by forcing me to acknowledge her thousand amiable graces, and to think of nothing but herself; a sentiment still stronger than that with which Madame Dubreuil had inspired me. I was never so tranquil, so contented, so happy, as in the society of my dear Signora, but when from her side I was quite another man, or rather, I should say, another woman. I always quitted her with a sort of lively regret, for which I was unable to account; neither could I understand why it was that, as soon as I saw her again, my vivacity, my felicity, every thing that I had lost in her absence, returned to me in her presence.

The partiality Signora Florina discovered for me was not less conspicuous than mine for her, so that I may say the fondness we had for each others company was so entirely mutual, that it was only to preserve proper appearances which made us submit to the shortest separations. I had often thought of discovering my sex, of recounting my history to this dear friend; and what do you suppose was the motive which made me put off my intention from one time to another?—

I will

I will tell you what it was....I had the weakness to fear she would regard me less in my real than she had done in my fictitious character, and whatever might rob me of her esteem, though only in part, I considered as a misfortune very well worth avoiding.

On going to her house one day, a day never to be forgotten, I found her in a humour more than commonly serious. My appearance, as usual, seemed to give her pleasure, but had not the powers of entirely withdrawing her from the profound reverie into which she had plunged herself before my arrival. This was also the time on which I had determined to explain myself at all events, so that instead of trying to inspire her with cheerfulness I adopted her thoughtfulness, and fell to considering the best manner in which I might remove the veil that obscured me from her knowledge. I had seated myself by her, and both continued silent several minutes; for my part I was so buried in meditating on the part I had to perform, that I started at the sound of her voice, when she desired me to listen attentively whilst she disclosed to me a secret the most important

tant to her safety, and never yet confided to a second person.

“ Say on, my dear Signora,” I cried out briskly, “ fear not that I will keep your secret, and, as the hostage of my faith, I will leave with you another of no less consequence to myself.”

“ What I shall reveal to you,” said she, smiling, “ is the strangest thing in the world, and, perhaps, I ought to begin with an apology for the dress in which you find me: yet, after all, why should I be ashamed of a disguise which cogent reasons, and those of necessity, have forced me to adopt. I suspected something—my face glowed like fire, but I did not interrupt her.

“ It is,” continued my pretended Signora, “ the timidity, but not the habit of a woman that disgraces manhood. In assuming the former I have not parted with the dignity which eternizes the latter—you are the first man to whom I have made my confession—by you only has my friendship been sufficiently engaged to warrant the disclosure

of my sex ; but since I first knew you I have conceived the friendship of a brother for you, and, in this tender light it is that, I hope, you will henceforth allow me to consider you."

"No!—ah, no!" cried I, hardly able to articulate, "it must not be as a brother—as a brother I can have no claims."

"Do you reject my offers of everlasting union with you?" said he, in a spirited tone ; "because you judge me unworthy to tie the knot of friendship with a man of honour."

"Moderate your transports!" I replied, calmly, "you will read my opinion of your merit, when I have told you the secret I promised to confide in you, which promise I am not inclined to retract : know then that this secret is not less wonderful than your own. If you have been hid under the garb of a woman, know that you now see before you a girl, whom circumstances, with reasons strong as your own, have thrown into this strange metamorphose. . . . Give then, I entreat

treat you, to my defenceless condition, a sister's claim on your heart as well as on your protection."

As I spoke thus, his countenance changed into an expression of joy that illumined it with more brightness than I was well able to contemplate. — "Allow me!" cried he out, pressing me with transport to his bosom, "allow me, by this fraternal embrace, to promise a thousand times more than you ask of me! . . . Yes, I shall, I do already love, already adore, the most lovely, the most adorable, of women! — I disclaim the title of brother — nothing but that of husband will now satisfy my ambition. . . . Dearest Creature, speak, and tell me that I am not the object of your aversion; — say, that I shall only exchange the discretest of my male friends for the most invaluable, the most respectable, of wives!"

Surprise, joy, love, and confusion hindered my answering his raptures in words; but my eyes, more honest, spoke for me, and, no doubt, told him I should not be cruel to a lover so amiable. — "From me you have

nothing to fear," added the pretended Florina; "why then suffer not your lips to pronounce the gracious sentiments I read on your beautiful face? why not make me, by this tender acknowledgment, the most happy of mankind? . . . My love finds its fervency equalled in nothing but the respect I bear you. — Heaven ordains our union — it is by the interference of that power which decides on our destiny that we are brought thus together, and shall we dare to resist the Divine Mandate? — should we not rather with joy fulfil the award of that Being, who bestows on me a sentence so glorious, and on you, I hope, one teeming with felicity."

"It is yet too soon," said I, "to speak on the subject of marriage; let us continue to love each other, and to respect ourselves. This passion, of which I do not refuse to take my part, has had so extraordinary, so short a birth, that its features will never resemble those of a common attachment, the constancy of which may be shaken by trivial occurrences. Begin to convince me, that your affection for me is built on esteem. . . . Give me a proof that it actually is so, by letting
me,

me, without reserve, into your confidence : my curiosity is not inferior to that of other women, though my education, by mere accident, has been more masculine ; my mind retains its natural perfections and foibles ; it shrinks from habits inconsistent with feminine delicacy, and expands to receive whatever can inform or entertain it.—Tell me, therefore, I entreat you, why it is that you disfigure yourself under your present habit ? ”

“ I shall do it,” returned he, seizing my hand, which he pressed to his lips, “ and on this hand I swear to discard from my soul every thought which you will not condescend to share with me. I have already reposed with you my happiness, and what is the merit of trusting also my life in your keeping. —I was born,” continued he, “ at Florence, and of a noble family, possessed of sufficient wealth to support its grandeur. My real name is Rosino ; at this, the happiest period of my existence, I have completed the current of two and twenty years, the earliest of which was spent at the place of my birth, and in the arms of my parents—these

parents, who had fixed the foundation of all their hopes on me, the sole inheritor of their name, their rank, and their riches," - - - - - He stopped here, " Pray tell me," said he, " what is your name? that I may sometimes have the pleasure of addressing you by it, to soften the labours on which you have made me enter." — I told him it was Rosalie. — " My God!" he exclaimed, " how like it is to my own—the fatality that unites us appears stronger than ever."—I smiled at his observation, though my judgment did not disapprove it, and he continued.

" Rosalie! well then, my dearest Rosalie, it is to you that I must complain of that partial fondness which my parents entertained for me, as it has, perhaps, prevented me from meeting with you long before; for who knows, if I had been permitted to ramble from the country of their residence, but I might have stumbled on that other which contained my treasure, without appearing before you under a disguise so full of grimace." — " You forget," cried I, interrupting him, " that you cannot condemn your
own

own transformation without covering me with confusion; spare yourself then for my sake, and tell me by what means you contrived, at last, to make your escape from paternal indulgence?"

"I effected it," he replied, "with a great deal of difficulty; but, after a world of entreaties, they consented to my taking a short excursion to the different ports of Italy, but limited my return to them within the compass of two months, which, being the best conditions I could make, I gladly embraced them. At Genoa I staid longer than at any other of the places I visited. I am now at confession, and must tell you why I thought it particularly pleasant: the Genoese husbands are very unlike those of Italy in general, who are tyrants to their poor unfortunate wives; on the contrary, your sex here enjoy very singular privileges, for, instead of losing their liberty by taking a husband, it is by the ceremony of marriage that a lady enlarges her freedom, acquiring certain rights to which, in a single state, she has no pretensions. So far from discarding lovers, they acquire new ones, whom the husbands are

proud to introduce to them, because they do not look upon it to be honourable to have given their name to a woman who is not beloved by others as well as themselves; so that, in this gay town, whoever marries a beauty, from that moment he is sure of having his house filled with the idolaters of his wife."——" And how, in the mean time," said I, " do these complaisant husbands contrive to carve for their own amusement?"——" Oh! very well, I assure you," he replied, " all the courtesans administer to their pleasures. . . . They may remain, if they please, with their ladies at home, night and morning, but never enjoy that pleasure after dinner, when the wives are entirely occupied by the flattery of their lovers. . . . it is then that all the women and all the gallants, (which are called *Sicisbés*), assemble together, every evening, sometimes at one house, sometimes at another, with the view that each *Sicisbé* shall be able to dedicate himself, without interruption, to the service of his favourite."

" Heavens!" cried I, " what a picture are you drawing of Nature in its greatest depravity."

vity."——"It is a faithful copy, however," said he; "and such are the manners of a republic, no one is held by any ties but those of inclination."——"What an excellent school," I observed, laughing, "for a young man's first launch into the world."——"True," answered he, joining in my mirth; "but spare me, dear Rosalie! spare me! or you will make me suppress some of these truths I mean to tell you, for fear they should draw on me your raillery, if I should have the good fortune to escape your censure."——"Fear not that I shall be severe upon you," said I; "however I may be inclined to find fault with your societies, you have a friend in my heart to plead for your indiscretions, but it possesses no palliatives that can give to vice the appearance of innocence."

"Divine preacher!" cried my enraptured lover, "I adore your rectitude of sentiment as much as I love your charms. I shall go on to tell you what your sex are in Genoa; and why should I fear your displeasure, for you will have the justice to consider that I was not the maker of them. No, no;" added he, "if I had been the creator of women,

men, I should have formed them after no other model than yourself." My heart fluttered with pleasure at a compliment so delicately constructed; yet I was hypocrite enough to charge my eyes with some sort of deceit, and I expressed my impatience to hear the continuance of his narrative; begging that he would return to the ladies of Genoa, whom he had left too abruptly.

"A beautiful woman," continued he, "has generally two lovers in her suit, who have their different appointments about her person; one to entertain her at the toilette, the other to walk before her chair to make room when there arises any embarrassments, which sometimes happen in the streets; and these two lovers accompany her wherever she goes—it is they who announce her on her visits, and who render these inferior offices, which usually fall to the lot of an upper servant to perform; but whilst the favoured lover is thus serving the wife, the very husband of that wife is making his election of another lady, who belongs to his neighbour; and what is singular enough, it happens that he is sometimes obliged to dispute the *pass* with

with the lover who conducts his own wife, and to defend her rights of whom he nominates himself the protector. Perhaps you imagine, charming Rosalie, that in such arrangements there must be a great deal of confusion—not at all; there is nothing of disorder in the business:—that same love which in other places men call the trouble of their lives, at Genoa constitutes their happiness. Jealousy changes its nature, and becomes politeness; and it is this transformation that preserves to them the easy tranquillity that nothing can disturb; love, they say, is only properly understood by themselves—the art of loving is with them a sublime science, the god of love is there better served, and they will tell you his votaries are more faithful than at any other place under the sun; if disputes ever arise, or discord disturbs their harmony, such events always proceed from strangers, who take up only a temporary residence with them.”

“ I confess to you I was enchanted with the pleasures that every where met my senses in this agreeable town; and it was for this reason I resolved to continue there as long as
I could;

I could; but to do like other young men of my condition, I too must make my election, and without hesitation I entered into the service of a young lady, not less considerable on account of her beauty and cleverness than for the rank by which she was distinguished: it was a long time after I had taken possession of my new post that she confounded my efforts to please amongst those of numberless admirers, all on the same pursuit with myself, but by little and little I at last arrived to the very great honour of walking before her chair, in fine, of becoming her Sicisbé in all its forms. This promotion of mine was reckoned an exquisite felicity, because the fair object by whom it was conferred was supposed to possess all that is most valuable in a mistress; besides, it was remarked also, that she did not omit any occasion of giving me pleasure."

"And no doubt she always succeeded," said I, interrupting him, and hardly knowing what I said.

"I am upon honour," replied he, "and depend on it, whatever were my thoughts, I shall

I shall not conceal any of them from you—but here I fall under a premature supposition—yet I forgive the hastiness of your judgement, because it is flattering to the sentiments I entertain for yourself.” This pardon, so pompously announced, made me discover that I had been downright telling him I was jealous, and that he had taken advantage of my folly: however, he carried his triumph no farther—my face was covered with blushes, but he did not augment my confusion by observing them—on the contrary, he pursued the thread of his discourse, as if it had never been broken.

“For my part, I neither tasted the pleasures of love, or felt its pains—fashion had directed my choice, and to fashion I sacrificed those hours which my constant attendance made it be believed were dedicated to the most passionate attachment: the number of rivals her charms gave me did not alarm my heart; it was then independent, keeping itself in reserve, for the only dear object by which it will ever consent to be occupied:—as for the Signora Valentina, the name of my *Belle Génoise*, she was nothing more to me than an agreeable

agreeable amusement—it was impossible she could ever have inspired me with a tender and lively affection. Do not think, adorable Rosalie, that I wish to hide from you any partiality which I might have felt for another.—No! there is the same truth in what I am telling you, as there is sincerity in my avowal of everlasting love to your lovely self; though I felt none of these sweet emotions for Signora Valentina, yet I liked her from vanity, and would not give up my place about her person to the son of an Italian prince, who occupied the second office in her establishment—an inferiority of rank neither suitable to his pride nor his passion: he looked on me as the bane of his felicity, which made him wait for my departure with a sort of imperious eagerness, which he took no pains to conceal.—That species of amusement I derived from my attendance on the Signora, very well contented me for my trouble; perhaps too, novice as I then acknowledge myself to be in a science wherein another was to be my sole instructress, it was not only possible, but extremely natural that I should fall into the error of believing my heart a little entangled: the young prince, much more
clear

clear sighted, discovered, by the coolness of my devoirs, how free it remained from any serious impresson; he now paid me more attention, courted my confidence, and at last, with a thousand importunities, entreated me that I would resign my pretensions in his favour: "Thus," said he, "without creating pain to yourself, you may make my happiness." I was hurt at an insinuation, by which I fancied my honour degraded, and completely fixed him my enemy, by refusing his request with a great deal of determination.—He, of all Italians I ever knew, happened to be the most violent and vindictive: that man who displeased him, had every thing to fear from his character; yet, too much flattered by having a prince for my unsuccessful rival, I continued obdurate, even to the voice of self preservation. Finding that he had no hopes of bringing me over to his wishes, he tried, by redoubling his assiduities, to gain upon the Signora's partiality; but she as stubborn as her more favoured Sicisbé, did not let him profit by them: in vain did he talk to her of the *eclat* of his birth—of the grandeur of his rank—in vain
those

those magnificent fêtes, of which she was the cause—in vain the thousand plans he formed to delight her, instead of making any progress in her affections, he was farther from them than ever: he had next recourse to presents, the value of which might have persuaded her at what a price he should estimate her condescension; but avarice had not tainted the soul of Valentina—his ostentation offended her—neither his riches nor his grandeur spoke for him—she rejected them all, and declared for me a decided preference in her heart, which she assured him was not to be purchased by all the wealth in his family. I perceived well enough, notwithstanding his efforts to hide it, that he was furious against me, yet I did not dread his menaces, and I defied his revenge.” “But was you not too heedless,” said I, “of your safety?” knowing the depravity of the rival who contended with you.” “Perhaps so,” he replied; “however, it is enough to repay all that my imprudence has cost me, to find by your question you are not uninterested in my fate. Yes! dear Rosalie! do not deny the truth of what is so flattering to your lover! Who is it, I pray,

I pray, that makes inquiries about what do not concern them?"—"Well then," returned I, laughing, "I must hold my tongue, I must make no more observations, since you dress them in so selfish a habit. Go on, I beseech you; I am dying with impatience—You left off with defying the revenge of your princely rival."—"Yes!" said he, "and I remained firm to the point, though advised by my friends, who knew him better than I did, to be on my guard, and to take care of myself: the Signora, who pretended to love me as much as she hated my competitor, grew seriously alarmed at the danger with which his resentment threatened me, and spoke to him plainer than she had ever done before of the umbrage his conduct gave her. Wrapped up in their own exaltation, princes in general regard other men as instruments in the hand of power—subservient beings, created for no other purpose than to aid their projects, to support their caprices, and to obtain for them the smallest of their wishes: he was therefore severely hurt to find in my resistance more steadiness, more hauteur than he supposed I had any right to exert: imagining, that this his rivalry happened in

the court of his father, he should only have had to speak in a certain tone, not merely to teach me submission, but to make me tremble; on the contrary, he considered with irritable vengeance that we were now both inhabitants of a republican state, and in a country of equality.

I continued my visits to the house of Signora, nor would abate the prince one inch of my prerogative: he, also heated by the most violent love, came every day to fill up his second place in her tender establishment. Thus we constantly met together, and as constantly his looks darted on me the most fiery indignation—I met them with equal fierceness. At last I one day said to him, “Why is it that we war with our eyes only? I am ready to attack you with my arm, but if I do you will certainly repent it.” He replied, he should wave that sort of revenge, because he was a prince, I was not one.—I received his high-flown apology as it deserved, with a sneer that spoke all the contempt of which my soul was capable, and for that time we parted.

Though

Though this magnificent prince did not chuse to risk his own life against a man who he proudly called his inferior, yet he had no objection to deprive me of mine, where little personal danger was to be apprehended; and thinking he could attack me with a great deal more advantage to himself by the aid of others, he hired for the purpose two assassins to dispatch me, putting his own dignified person at their head. These wretches waylaid me one evening as I was returning home from a grand supper given by Signora Valentia, and from which the prince had absented, under some pretence feigned for the occasion; they, instantly on seeing me, drew their swords, and I also took mine from the scabbard, when, seeing I had no less than three ruffians to encounter, I exerted all my courage, backed by skill, to make the best of a very precarious situation, by which I not only secured my safety, but had the good fortune to lay two of them dangerously wounded at my feet, and the third man, who happened to be the prince, finding himself alone in combat with me, would have made a retreat, but before the coward could accomplish his flight, I wounded and very

easily disarmed him. In despair at the total defeat of his bloody purpose, after reckoning so much on the advantages he should have over me, he was moved to another stroke of vengeance, which must inevitably have put an end to my life, if some of my friends had not given me timely notice; they not only assured me that all my steps were closely watched, but brought, as proofs of his base determination, such official evidence as could not be discredited; but whilst they advised me to make my escape by flight, none of them could put me in a way how it might be effected.—“ Ah!” cried I, forgetting my promise of making no more observations, “ Ah! how much are you obliged to those good friends; I think the example of this odious prince infects me with cowardice, for I tremble at your danger.”—“ Amiable Rofsale,” replied my lover, “ if I were to follow my inclination, I should fall at your feet; but no! were I to indulge my transports, I should never have done with my history, which is now drawing to a conclusion; for when assured there was no other possibility of saving myself from certain assassination but by privately withdrawing from Genoa,

Genoa, and even this only resource so difficult of attainment, I disguised my person in the habit of a woman, by which means I escaped from the spies that surrounded me, and took shelter on board a small vessel going to Marseilles, where I arrived in safety. To preserve the delicacy of my female character, I there engaged my old *femme de chambre* to accompany me in my voyage hither—I forgot this good woman when I told you no third person knew my secret with her I ventured to entrust it, and she has ever held my confidence inviolable.—I left all my things behind me at Genoa, but whence I landed at Marseilles I dispatched orders that they should be sent to my parents; I also wrote the same friend to whom I gave this commission, requesting he would carefully watch every motion of the prince, that I might get rid of my disfigurement if I could do it with safety.—He answered me, by no means to think of quitting my disguise; that I had every thing to fear from the prince, who was still in pursuit after me, searching in all places wherever he thought it might be likely to meet with me.—“The only part you have to act,” said he, “is to keep on your female

dress, and to live retired, otherwise this determined murderer will trace your footsteps, and infallibly put an end to your existence—I know him well; and I know he is capable of even blacker deeds than those with which you are threatened.”

A caution so wisely administered was not to be cast away; I conducted myself by it with all the respect it merited, and some time after I wrote to him again to ask if there yet remained any cause of concealment, letting him know I intended going to Paris. He answered me in these words: “Your detestable enemy is more irritated, more furious than ever; he has publicly laid himself under the most solemn curse to take your life—you deprive him of his love—you shew him to the world divested of honour—he never will forgive you—go where you please, but hide your person from his emissaries as well as from himself.”

“It is owing to the council of my friend, charming Rosalie, that since I came to Paris I have not torn off the mask that so long concealed me from you—I have received no
visits

visits but those you had the goodness to make me—you have been dear to my heart as its own vital blood from the first time I beheld you; yet, ah! how infinitely dearer than life in these the most precious moments I have ever experienced.”—I could not speak—I held out my hand, and felt a tear fall upon it as he pressed it with ardour to his lips.—

“Alas!” continued he, “how unfavourable is the point of view in which I must present myself to you—a persecuted wanderer—divorced from my country—driven from my family—forced to live far from them unknown and unknown: yet I do not complain that the rigours of my destiny are insupportable, because my misfortunes have procured me the felicity of being beloved by you—Have I said too much, or will you, by authorizing my presumption, ascertain my happiness?”

“All, all,” cried I, “every thing that I can say or do to give you consolation will feebly explain the sentiments with which you have inspired me; but, Rosino, dear Rosino! take care of that life in which I claim an interest greater than your own—

guard it from a prince so infernal ! — Never, never shall you put yourself in the way of that monster — never quit the habit you have assumed till his life, or his vengeance, is come to a termination. — Yes! yes! so much wickedness must have an end one way or another — he will die, or he will repent, or he will, in time, have forgotten you let us wait patiently as we are till one of these events take place, when you will again be restored to your family, to your country, and to yourself.”

“ The agonies in which my parents must find themselves at my absence,” he replied, “ is now the only cause for grief that I will allow myself to cherish ; all lesser evils are swallowed up in your bounty ; of this I cannot acquit my heart ; and if it were not that my adorable wife might partake my danger, I would, this hour, plight you my vows at the altar, and the next conduct you to the arms of these estimable parents, in their presence to renew them, and to share with you their affections.”

“ Rosino ! ”

“Rosino!” said I, “I see with pleasure that you love me, but your love is not, I fear, regulated by prudence: you neither inquire from whom I sprung, from whence I came, or what fortune I possess.”-----
 He was going to interrupt me with the passionate energy of anticipated language, that told me what would be his reply; but I stopped him before the commencement of verbal expression, by assuring him I would hear nothing till I had declared my objections to so hasty a decision on his part more fully.

“Besides,” continued I, having enforced on him that silence from which he seemed, by the eagerness of his gestures, impatient to absolve himself—“besides the disadvantages I have spoken of respecting my birth and situation, there are others that should appear to you still more formidable: you know no more of my character than you do of my birth or fortune; you are even ignorant of my motives for entering into the disguise I have adopted. They may be laudable; but is there not an equal chance that
 they

they may deserve censure? — you cannot be certain they were good, yet I would not have you believe them to be bad. For your own sake as well as for mine, before you give me your heart, let your judgement be consulted, let it convince you that I am not unworthy the great sacrifice you would make me — you may now be only struck with a fierce, but temporary passion, which, if you suffer it to master your better reason, will soon come to an untimely end. . . . Love does not suffer the most ardent of his votaries always to continue in a state of blindness to the faults of their mistresses; after a time he is as ready to unveil their sight as he was to tie the bandage over their eyes. Never will I be the cause of deceiving or dragging you into that entanglement from which you cannot escape, in your present state of darkness; regarding the object you honour so highly, you love me without knowing why, and without knowing for what: bye and bye you may, from the same caprice, cease from loving me at all; or, if that should not exactly be the case, let me ask, would you not, in your turn, have some reason to fear
for

for the constancy of a heart so little steady to the point of prudence, and, perhaps, too easily disposed of ? ”

“ I can bear this no longer,” cried he ;
“ you talk divinely, but you talk too much like a philosopher for a lover of my description to be contented with hearing you argue him out of his senses — mine are all concentrated in one ; I live only to love, and I love only the most beautiful and the wisest of her sex ! . . . My affection, it is true, was very soon kindled — but it will never, never be extinguished ! — As to your birth and fortune, let who will trouble themselves with such considerations, they are no concerns of mine, I assure you ; and as to your character and motives, perfect or imperfect, I am willing to take them as they are, and to attach myself to them all the days of my life ! — However, as a matter of curiosity in which doubt has no share, if you have the goodness to instruct me in those adventures, to which I am indebted for the most exquisite of human felicity, I shall not only listen to you with rapture, but imprint every honeyed accent that escapes from your beautiful lips on
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the heart, that, as long as it beats in the bosom of its master, will refuse every other character, except those which shall be impressed on it by your charms, your virtues, and your condescensions ! ”

“ What I am about to relate,” said I, “ will astonish you. There are few who have met with adventures so singular as mine; listen to and believe them, for I shall not endeavour to impose on your senses a false representation.”—Having uttered these words, I developed to him as much as I knew of my birth, the mystery of which was yet unravelled to myself. I told him of my being found in the forest of Ardennes by the venerable Recluse — how fondly he cherished my infancy—how tenderly he loved me—how carefully he instructed me—repeated our conversations together, with the life and death of my beloved benefactor. I then conducted my sympathizing lover by the road that led me from my native woods — I let him behold me entering on the broad world—I concealed nothing from him; my very thoughts were marshaled to present themselves before him; I was giving him a proof of my sincerity,
and

and I wished him to take a review of my whole soul. — “ See,” cried I, having brought my history to an end — “ see now if you think me deserving of that affection with which you honour me.” — He was at my feet in a moment. — “ Why is it,” said he, “ that you offend my love, and insult my reason, by a question which must set them both in doubtful prospective? — Have I no heart to worship Virtue, or do I want understanding to adore Wisdom? — you are a thousand times more than my partiality had before imagined, of all human perfection united in one object. From this moment, divine Rosalie, let me be to you the parents, the friends, the country of which you are still uncertain — grant to me that lovely hand, consent to unite in the dearest of all ties, let the name of husband fill up every blank in your bosom, and fear not that you are conferring favours on a man who will never cease to acknowledge them.”

“ Dear Rosino,” I replied, with tears in my eyes, and obliging him to rise from my knees, “ how much am I affected by your generosity ; but you must still have patience
with

with me, for I have yet a great deal to say on your favourite topic.... Ah! can you, indeed, suppose that I will hear you speak to me of marriage when your life is in danger from the pursuit of a serpent who lays in wait to sting you mortally? — No! no! — do not believe that I will assist you in a design so full of rashness.... Is it me who you expect to add to the difficulties of your situation, by encumbering you with my own troubles? — Think well, Rosino, we have only our love for each other, to make up our whole sum of happiness.... let us not dare to risk so large a treasure on a sea so boisterous; rather let us look forward to a more serene atmosphere, before we embark our loves and our fates together.”

“ Is it yourself, or me,” cried he, rather angrily, “ that you mean to spare by all this prudence, Madam? — Oh! I perfectly understand! — If that fate, of which you seem so much afraid, should overtake me before our union is ratified, you certainly propose to tell me your tears would flow with less violence for a lover than for a husband; but
know

know that, in my soul, these two characters shall never, never be divided."

"Your immoderate accusation," I replied, "afflicts, but does not offend me, because it flows from a source of kindness, the sweets of which are dear to me. . . . My heart is as tender as your own—it is as deeply impressed as your own. . . . think then if my tears could be numbered for that loss, which I cannot bear to contemplate—think whether you do me justice in believing there would be any balance on the score of that ceremony, which, however binding, cannot increase the honourable love I avow for you. . . . Will this confession satisfy your unreasonable scruples?"

"I have no scruple," cried he, "in acknowledging you the most amiable of women! myself the most fortunate of men!—but I will yet contend with you on the point for which we are disputing."

"Let us then pursue it," returned I; "I insist on beginning the renewal of our argument, and I tell you beforehand I shall never
dismiss

dismiss my forces till you reduce them by an army of reasons stronger than my own — for know, I have by choice lived so much with my own sex, that I will defy any of them to come off better in a battle of words than I shall do.” — “ If this is really the case,” said he, “ I should be a fool to declare against the powers of your sex, aided by those I have given you over myself ; better sue for an honourable peace than pursue an unprofitable war. From this moment I throw myself on your mercy ; I appoint you the general of my refractory hopes and wishes ; regulate their impetuosity with gentleness — I constitute you my jury and my judge ; I wait my sentence ; wise I know it will be, but let it be merciful as wise.”

“ You know,” replied I, “ how to conquer with a good grace, and this is your sentence . . . love me as well as you can, and love me for ever ; but wait patiently till those bars shall be removed which at present obstruct our union ! — As soon as you can shew yourself without danger in your true character, you must go to your parents ; you must make me known to them ; you must procure

procure them to receive me as their daughter and your wife, or, whatever may be the flattering opinion of your own choice, they may reject it; the consent, nay more, the approbation, of parents are necessary to the happy establishment of their children. —

Oh! how mortifying would it be to enter into a family as an object of dislike, to be treated with marks of contempt, to have the infelicity of knowing we deserve no better, for presuming to form connections on which they have never been consulted: — in a word, dear Rosino, rather than deserve the fate I have been describing, I would renounce all happiness, I would renounce even yourself.”

“ Stop! cruel as you are,” cried he out; “ do not, I beseech you, offer to my view this frightful image, dressed up in the terrors of imagination: — how can you suppose I would suffer my family to shew you that disrespect which alarms you? — No! my friends can find but one way to my heart; it must be through their unremitting attentions to my adorable Rosalie. Ah! be assured that when you are known to my father and mother, they

will love you even better than they love the son of their fondest indulgence."

"What you tell me," said I, "flatters my affection, and soothes my vanity; yet think not that it has made me a convert to imprudence—never will I recede, because never will I lay myself open to repentance; if I had received my birth in a common manner—if I had known my parents, or even your's, I would not have hesitated between suspense and happiness—I would have been your's immediately; perhaps on the score of fortune I have enough to satisfy parents of more avarice, than your's are possessed of bounty."

"Ah! tell me then," he exclaimed, "tell me how I may hope to obtain you, without spending my life in vain expectation of the prince's death, or reform, both of which are out of all visible distance: have you no palliative to heal the wound you give me?"—"Yes!" said I, "there is one that I am willing to administer: write to your father and mother—obtain their sanction—and depend on my obedience to your commands, authorized

authorised by their approbation."—"Oh!" cried he, rapturously, "that will easily be gained; I have nothing to do but send away my letter, and I will dispatch it this moment."—"You do not know the labour you have undertaken," I replied; "a moment will not suffice for the letter you meditate; you must make it declare to them who I am, and every thing I have been doing since I came into the world; tell them my history, be very clear in all its circumstance; let truth and not passion be your dictator."—"And what necessity is there," he observed, "for my telling them you are unknown by your parents?"—"A great deal," said I; "the love I bear to you, and the respect I owe to myself, forbid me to appear before them under false pretences."—"No, no: I must shew them this wife, for whom you solicit their approbation, such as she really is, that hereafter they may have nothing wherewith to reproach her." Rosino yielded reluctantly to my commands, but at last executed them very faithfully, and I had the pleasure of seeing my eventful memoirs elegantly sketched by the most eloquent as well as the most partial of lovers, who concluded his charm-

ing picture of my worthless self, by requesting an immediate grant to make the beloved original his own; and we waited for their reply with the utmost impatience: for my part I had very little hope, that it would be favourable to a girl, whose birth was at best equivocal; but these doubts I was forced to hide from Rosino, who on account of his own forebodings, was already in no enviable state of serenity; he sometimes almost quarrelled with me for what I had made him do so much against his inclinations. “Your extreme and scrupulous delicacy, would he say, will be the cause of my misery: it is so long since when you made me write this horrible letter, that I have nearly lost all hopes of calling you mine: even were this to happen, I should reply still, we ought not to be sorry at having performed our duty, though at the expence of our happiness.” With such sort of answers, to such sort of complaints, he would be sometimes pleased, sometimes angry—but ever the most captivating of mankind.

At the end of five weeks those answers which had cost us so much in expectation arrived, to pay the demands we could make
upon

upon them for the many cheerful moments and hours of composure, of which they had deprived us. Rosino opened these welcome letters with trembling hands; he examined the contents; they were fraught with the happiest intelligence that could have met his eyes; they informed him the Prince de ****, his enemy, was no more a subject of terror, that he had died by poison; and to engage their son's return with all possible expedition to Italy, they promised him, if he would come quickly, their full approbation of his projected marriage with me, of whom they said many obliging things, and signified their wishes to embrace a daughter so amiable,

“ Now, Rosalie, now,” cried my exulting lover, “ can you find no other subterfuge, by which to retard my felicity; whose consent do you command me next to apply for, or are you satisfied, and will you no longer withhold a blessing that I solicit with so much ardour?—let us instantly drop all disguise, assume our proper dresses, and let us be seen together in the streets of Paris.”

“ Already we have been seen there,” I replied, “ you as a girl, and I as a man: by

my own promise, I now owe submission to your will in every thing, but allow me to ask, if the change you propose, as to our figures, may not create tales of scandal, that ought not to glance on the character of your wife, and the daughter of your parents? rather let me advise that we keep on our present habits, till we reach Lyons; that is a large town; we may there quit them with propriety, and no other obstacle will then arise to retard our journey, at the end of which I desire, with all my heart, to be united to you for ever."

Rosino could not but consent to a proposition so full of submission, yet I saw that he was not entirely delighted with the arrangement. "This habit," he would say, "is extremely awkward to me—pray let us be gone to-morrow, that I might get rid of it as fast as I can;" and we immediately set about preparing for our departure from Paris. I hope there are few young maidens but what are too well acquainted with the suggestions of modesty, ever to miscall it by the name of prudery: trusting then that my fears will be carried to account of the former, I shall not
scruple

scruple to own, that some such I did entertain when about to embark on a long voyage, without a companion of my own sex, under the conduct of one man, and that man my lover.—He who knew the delicacy of my soul on all occasions, could not fail at guessing what a wound it was going to receive; and with his accustomed goodness he soon set me at perfect ease with my embarrassing situation. “I will love you,” said he, “only as the most respectful of brothers, till we arrive in Italy; I will there exchange characters, and take upon me the tenderest, the most passionate of husbands.”

When travelling towards Lyons, to keep up the farce we were acting, I put the pretended Signora, with her *femme de chambre*, into one of the public carriages, whilst I followed them on horseback; never was there any thing half so ridiculous as the setting out of this journey, neither Rosino nor I could help laughing, as often as our eyes met each other:—conceive to yourself my lover descending from the coach, and I offering my hand to assist him; then, reader, if you can help it, do not laugh with us.”

I called him my sister at the first inn where we were to sleep, and immediately asked for a room with two beds, which were promised to us, and we supped happily together. Just after we had finished, the host came in to tell us that Monsieur, the *Bailli* of the next town, with Madame the *Baillive* accompanying him, had just arrived, and he did not know where to put them, but hoped we would have the goodness to let them partake of our apartment. “Mademoiselle, your sister,” said he to me, pointing to Rosino, “can sleep with Madame *la Baillive*, and I pray you allow Monsieur *le Bailli* to share *your* bed.” —“Is there no other inn than your’s?” asked Rosino, who would not put me to the pain of speaking; “I suppose there must be one more at least, where these troublesome people may remove themselves; for our parts we have retained the beds, and will occupy them alone.” —“Monsieur,” replied the host, looking at me, “would not have refused my request of accommodating these great people.” —“I am very sorry,” returned Rosino, “but that cannot alter the case.” — The man went out grumbling to carry our message

message to the *Bailli* and his lady; but it is impossible to describe the consternation into which this proposition of our host had thrown us, for to say the truth, I should have been quite as much vexed to have let Rosino sleep with the *Baillive* as he could have been, had I consented to share half my bed with the *Bailli*.

Before we recovered from our dream of astonishment, it received some addition by the entrance of those who had been the innocent occasion of our confusion; they were come to make trial of their own personal influence—on finding the host had been unsuccessful in his representation, Madame *la Baillive* politely asked if it was absolutely out of our power to grant her the favour she had requested by the master of the house, who she understood had most unfortunately for them met with a refusal. “Madame,” said I, “my sister and I are both extremely fatigued with our journey; we require rest; we have always been used to sleep alone—to have a companion would very much disturb us—therefore we have occasion for both beds: nevertheless, you being perhaps as much
tired

tired as ourselves, and in as much need of repose, we will consent to give you up our two beds entire, whilst we endeavour to pass this night without them as well as we can."

La Baillive, struck with the civility of my offer, would not accept it, but represented to us that the beds were sufficiently large for us all.

"What I have had the honour of telling you, Madame," I replied, "is extremely true; that neither my sister nor I have ever been used to half a one; we should not close our eyes if we had any body to share it; and I do assure you the night will be much shorter to us if we pass it on *fauteuils* by the fire-side."

"Since that is so easy to be done," said Monsieur *la Bailli*, "I will follow your example; let our ladies possess the two beds, and, instead of lying down, you and I, if you please, can spend our time agreeably enough at piquet." I accepted this proposal with joy;

joy; Rosino went to bed in one room, and *la Baillive* in the other.

This Baillive was young, and extremely handsome, so that I thought Rosino would not have died of grief, had he shared his own with her, when he had seen it settled, that I was not to partake that of *la Bailli*. This idea running in my head, I could not set down to cards, or any thing else, till I had satisfied myself that they were both fast asleep, and in separate apartments; but having convinced my eyes of this delightful fact, I returned to *le Bailli*, and began to play at piquet with great spirit.

Le Bailli, after losing some games and some money, told me he was tired of play; at the same time asking my permission to go and place himself by the side of his wife. I not only gave my consent, but fullest approbation, and as soon as he retired I fell back in my chair, where I slept sweetly for two hours, when I was awakened by the people of the house, who came to tell me it was time for us to be going, the horses being already put to the coach; I ordered my horse to be brought

brought out—ran to inform Rosino—and having bade adieu to *le Bailli* and *la Bail-live*, we set out, pursued our route towards Lyons, and arrived there the same night, at an hour so conveniently late, that we entered our inn, which was not a very public one, without any person's seeming to observe us, by which means we soon exchanged dresses with each other, and being much of the same size, we were not discovered to have done so.

When standing before my glass, I was extremely pleased with my transformation; the delicacy of my person no longer obscured by a habit that deformed it; my hair unconfined, falling in natural ringlets over my shoulders; the vivacity of my eyes, which sparkled with joy, as I thought, what would be the emotions of Rosino, when I presented myself before him; the blushes which laid themselves softly over my cheeks, naturally fair, at the bare idea of his rapturous expressions, worked altogether, and made up between them no contemptible beauty. I was soon ready, and entered the apartment where he waited for me, to ascertain the truth of those tales
my

my heart had been telling; and I found them only wrong in having drawn the transports of my lover much too feebly; but that was no fault in the designer, it was only himself who could properly express them.

Notwithstanding all that I have said of the delight I felt on first stepping into the dress of a woman, I had no sooner turned away from my looking glass than I began to find my new habiliments exceedingly incommodious, and for the few days we staid to refresh ourselves at Lyons I was constant to the same opinion; my head-dress was always falling off, or getting awry—the handkerchief that covered my bosom was so much thinner than the waistcoat to which it had been accustomed, as to persuade me I was half naked—my arms too suffered from a still greater exposure, and though extremely white, what merit that circumstance might have given them was entirely lost, by my not knowing how to manage them: my awkwardness did not end here; my petticoats when I walked along very much impeded my steps; I tumbled, tripped, or got my heels entangled in them every moment: in short, there

there were but two things which in any manner reconciled me to these perpetual grievances. It was that I thought myself more handsome, and knew that I was dearer than ever to the affections of my lover.

The progressive motion of our journey was from *Lyons* to *Avignon*—from *Avignon* to *Aix*—and from *Aix* to *Marseilles*. As I approached near that country, where it was probable I should continue for the remainder of my life, the most serious reflections would sometimes intrude themselves on my past present, and future situation: in the past I had nothing to regret—in the present I had every thing to hope.—But for the future—ah! for the future—“Who knows,” cried I, “what the future may produce; I am going to marry the lord of all my wishes; I am going to gain a solid establishment in the alliance of an honourable family: but though my happiness branches out into so many directions, yet it suspends only by one delicate fibre; if the love of Rosino should ever sever, the whole stock of my well-built felicity tumbles to the ground—there will in that case be nothing left to me worth preserving.” But
all

all these efforts of a weak mind were sure to vanish at the sight, or the voice of my destined husband.

Obliged to wait at *Marseilles* for a vessel, which might convey us either to Genoa or Leghorn: in the mean time we contrived to amuse ourselves very well, by often walking on the port, and visiting the galleries; on these excursions I had no greater pleasure than that of addressing myself to the Turkish slaves, and asking them questions. There was one in particular to whom I constantly spoke, without his once deigning to make me any sort of answer; his figure was that of despair, and his whole soul seemed wrapped up in gloom, through which no ray of comfort was able to penetrate. These observations only gave an edge to my curiosity; I redoubled my efforts, and at last made him understand the part I took in his sorrows, as well as the wish I entertained of relieving them. He could not always resist my re-irritated entreaties; at last he said to me—
 “Thinkest thou, O Christian! that it is thou who canst assuage the grief by which I am devoured. Can Christian kindness ad-
 minister

minister balfam to heal the wounds inflicted by our holy prophet? Forbear the prefumption! I accept thy pity, but I decline thy aid.—Mahomet, who knows the juft caufe of my defolation, can alone recompence my woes, by taking me from a life of irredeemable mifery, to another of eternal blifs, which he has promifed to all true believers.”

“ You fay right,” I replied; “ there are certain misfortunes in this world, for which there is no other fupport than what we acquire, by repofing our confidence on a Supreme Providence; my heart bleeds for thofe under which I fee you fuffering, yet I have, young as I am, known one whose trials of fortitude were not lefs bitter than your own.” I thought of my beloved Reclufe; I thought of that dreadful fcene which fhewed him the body of his adored wife ftretched on the bed of death, by one fatal error in his judgement; and as I fpoke to the poor Turk tears followed my words.

“ I cannot believe,” faid he, “ that man ever exifted who would dare to call himfelf
fo

to great a wretch as I am."—"Suppose," returned I, "you were to make me the umpire of this question: let me know the occasion on which your despair is founded, and I will tell you faithfully if I have not seen one other more miserable than yourself; do me the justice to believe I ask this information more with the view to ease your mind from a part of its burden, by disclosing your woes to the ear of sympathy, than to satisfy a childish curiosity, which in giving pain to others seeks only its own gratification."

"Ah!" cried he, lifting his eyes from the ground on which he rivetted them, "forgive me, Holy Prophet, if I err from thy will, in not refusing to hear the voice of a Christian, who talks in language that would not disgrace the disciples of thy blessed Alcoran." He paused a moment; then addressing himself to me, "Thou hast conquered," said he; "I am willing to indulge thy desire, though it will cost thee dear if thy heart is in unison with thy speech, or dictates to the expression of thy countenance."

HISTORY *of the* TURKISH SLAVE.

Africa is the place of my birth, though you now behold me in France, but it is not the estrangement from my country that causes my affliction: I abhor the whole world, my country included in it — all places are to me alike insupportable, alike odious. I would seek to forget that country once so dear to me — but, oh! I must ever, ever remember it with horror. I regard all the human species as my foes, him only excepted to whom I owe my unfortunate existence. — My father was an inhabitant of Tripoli, in which town lived a girl, as charming, as gentle, as innocent as yourself; I loved and was beloved by her — our parents saw, approved, and consented to crown our wishes all then was joy, happiness, tranquillity in my bosom — all that now remains is sorrow, misery and desperation. Our union was so far advanced, that nothing remained to conclude it but the forms which were to unite us, when a rival appeared, thrust himself between me and happiness, intending to ravish
from

from me the hopes I so fondly cherished — those hopes so flattering, so sweet of aspect, were destined to put on the complexion of despair. — See now the commencement of my misfortunes, and the end of my felicity.

One advantage did this cruel spoiler possess over me; better he had a thousand others than that *one* — he was richer than I, and his magnificence distilled so subtle a poison over the sordid mind of *Selim*, the father of *Selima*, my mistress, as made him withdraw the consent he had before given to complete the union our hearts had contracted, by joining our hands together, and I received his positive commands never more to enter his house, where he now received my rival the renegade Mahmoud, with all the ostentation of a decided preference. The dear, dear *Selima*, in the midst of a thousand trials to shake her fidelity, remained faithful to her first engagement; she would not accept the visits of my rival, and contrived to let me know that her heart would ever take refuge in my bosom from every possible storm that could assail it — a blessing for which I returned thanks to our Great Prophet, implor-

ing him, with ardour, that he would not permit a woman so constant to become the wife of a wretch so unworthy of her.——
“ Father of the Musselmén,” cried I, “ listen to the prayer of a true believer! I only ask of you the virtuous Selima, and the righteous punishment of a wicked renegade, who only embraces thy pure religion from interested motives ? ” — Our Prophet doubtless heard my petition — but, alas ! it remained unanswered, and I became the most wretched, not only of the faithful, but of all mankind.

Mahmoud could neither conquer the love with which he burnt for Selima, nor vanquish her coldness for him ; he, therefore, renewed his application to her father, pressing him most ungenerously to force that hand she would not voluntary unite with his. ——
“ You,” he would say, “ are the master of her fate, and obedience is her duty.”

Selim, fearing to lose an alliance so advantageous, abused the authority Heaven had delegated to him, and, under a heavy malediction, laid his commands on the distracted
girl

girl to receive this man as her husband ; besides which he threatened her with cruelties at which the soul of an executioner would have revolted : yet was not this constant, this noble-minded creature intimidated by measures so hardened, as entirely to make them lose the effects for which they were intended. She replied to them with all the respect of a daughter, but with all the firmness of virtuous determination. “ I love another,” said she ; “ I love that other, under your sacred sanction ; Mahmoud shall never be my husband !—that Mahmoud, to whose evil counsel I owe your displeasure, shall never be the object of my tenderness. Ah ! my father, you threaten me with death if I do not obey you : give it me then, I will make no resistance.—I will receive it from your hand as a blessing, rather than unite my own with that of Mahmoud.”

Selim, who knew the character of his daughter, and who loved her too well to execute the threats he had menaced, went out to seek the villain, whose arts had pervaded all the softness of natural affection, which once occupied his heart, for the child on

whom he doted; and having found Mahmoud, he advised him to wait patiently till time should change her sentiments into others more favourable to his pretensions; but he was refractory, and Selima underwent new persecutions.

I constantly heard all that Selima felt—all that she sustained for my sake. In consequence of her faith and sufferings, my passion for her increased, as did, in the same proportion, my soul flame out with fury against my detestable rival. Entirely irritated, I one day encountered him with a sabre in my hand, resolving to die for Selima, or slay him dead at my feet who prevented my living for her. He, on the contrary, liked better to act the part of a coward, than risk his safety in a generous combat: he was in a terrible fright; I gave him a blow of contempt, and left him to the enjoyment of his disgraced existence: after this skirmish he observed my motions with the watchful eyes of a monster who waited my destruction,

I every day wrote letters to Selima, which she was not permitted to receive; but sometimes

times she contrived means of letting me hear from her: the messages she sent me were so full of tenderness, that I have more than once been tempted to remove the only obstacle to my felicity, but my soul was too honest to give a moment's harbour to a thought that would have covered it with infamy.

Heaven seemed at this period to interfere itself in my favour, and the anguish of my mind was assuaged by a circumstance I did not expect—a slave belonging to Selima found an opportunity of telling me I was ordered by her to hire a vessel, she being determined to forsake her father—friends—country—to be mine—only mine, and to fly with me to the remotest ends of the world. “Happy day,” cried I; “now do I see the termination of all my troubles—but you, you,” said I, “who are the blessed messenger of these glorious tidings, how shall I recompense your fidelity?”—the slave, no less generous than her mistress was constant, went away without my being able to force any gratuity on her acceptance; but first we fixed that I should

be at the gate of Selim's garden, at a certain hour on the third night, where I was to wait for Selima till she came to throw herself on my protection.

I took up the three days that intervened between me and happiness in preparing every necessary for the long voyage we were going to undertake. I went to the port; I offered liberally to the captain of an English ship; I told him to make his own terms, provided he would convey myself and six other persons (I did not name) to Constantinople, where my relations were settled: he agreed to the proposition—demanded a high price—I joyfully paid him down the whole money in advance; and soon after embarked all my possessions on board the vessel,

Having taken these precautions, that nothing might retard our departure, my hopes grew more and more sanguine, and I panted with impatience for the appointed moment of furison to arrive; at length it came—but oh! Holy Prophet! the dawn of that morning which was to usher in all that I could taste of mortal

mortal happiness only served to light me on my way to everlasting misery.

I went to my appointed post—I gave a signal before agreed upon—the garden door opened—I entered—I saw my beloved Selima—she ran towards me—she threw herself into my arms—dear moment of bliss! when for the only time in my life I held her in my embraces. It was but for one ecstatic moment. “Come,” I cried, “come, without fears, to be the tender companion of a husband, who will ever adore you.—Come, let us fly this odious place—let us seek another country where our mutual love will have no difficulties to combat—where our lives shall pass away in blessing, and in being blessed—where our bosoms will be the abode of tranquillity—where no cruel father thwarts our wishes—where no treacherous rival invades our peace. Where is that situation in the wide world, of which we cannot form to ourselves a paradise, which shelters our innocent passion, and where we shall not be separated from each other.” She pressed my hand—she was unable to speak—tears trickled down her beautiful cheeks; however, she made no resistance,

sistance, but abandoned herself to my conduct, whilst two slaves who attended her bore along with us a great quantity of diamonds and other valuables.

We left the garden, keeping a profound silence—we were afraid to speak, afraid to breathe—we could only look—our looks were fraught with the raptures of success—our eyes could not, but our voices might have betrayed us—thus stealing swiftly along, we arrived near the sea—we could see the ship which was waiting to take us on board—my mind was occupied by nothing but dreams of delight, when suddenly the reverie became dispersed, never to reunite—the first symptom which put it to flight was a great noise that issued from that side of the garden through which we had lately passed, and too soon the enemy appeared in view.

Selim, with Mahmoud at his side, followed by almost numberless domestics armed with sabres, approached towards us.—“Save yourself, adorable Selima,” I cried, “and as my death is now certain, preserve for me that heart which I shall die happy in knowing

ing I only have possessed." — My foes, as I spoke thus, all surrounded me — I drew my sabre — my arm seconded the fury of my feelings — Mahmoud received my first blows — I then carried my desperation still farther, and dealt them round the slavish crew, four of whom expired under the violence of my intrepidity — the quickness of my motions intimidated all the rest; they seemed to hang off as if they would avoid the madness of the unaimed destruction which I carried amongst them: Selim alone would venture to encounter with me — I regarded him no more as the father of my mistress, but as the man who would ravish her from me — Selima saw the danger her parent was exposed to — she saw it with horror — she saw her father going to fall by the hands of her lover — she saw the slaves of Selim attack me on every side to defend their master — she beheld the whole scene with distraction — she rushed forward, threw herself between the two combatants, both equally beloved, when, alas! the cursed arm of a Moor pierced the pure bosom of that heaven-created being — she screamed — she staggered — she fell lifeless at my feet, and
I was

I was stained all over with the blood of my angel mistress.

Here paused the miserable narrator, and by his agitations again put me in mind of my dear solitary when he told me his dreadful tale in the forest of Ardennes; I wept for him, I wept for the slave, I wept for them singly, and I wept for them together—my sympathy was unheeded by a wretch absorbed in his own direful destiny; as soon as he recovered from his confusion he continued to speak, without seeming to consider that I was present, but like one who is talking to himself.—“No, I never shall forget,” cried he, “the fury that inspired me when the blood of Selima sprinkled my face and dashed against the hands that would have sustained her—why is it that I cannot again pursue those blows with which I fought to revenge her death? Base, degenerate foes, it was you who wrested from me the weapon I would have used to exterminate thy reptile souls from the bosom of the earth.”

Rosino had walked from us, and I began to tremble a little for the effects of his disorder; I therefore requested that he would
have

have the goodness to compose himself, and to tell me what remained behind of his history.—“ I shall do so,” said he, “ and thank you for snatching me out of a delirium that might have hurried me beyond the bounds of rationality ; I will try to be more consistent.—Mahmoud, seeing me disarmed, ran to cut off my head, but his desperate intentions were opposed by Selim—‘ I reserve,’ said he, ‘ his punishment to myself—I would that his torments should endure as long as nature lengthens his existence—immediate death would be mercy to what he has shewn me, by giving me the fate of a daughter to lament whose loss can never be repaired.’

“ Accuse not me,” I sternly replied ; “ impute not to me a misfortune of which you only are the cause—it was you who deprived of life the lovely daughter you mourn—it was you who would have torn our hearts asunder ; yes, you, who bid them unite—it is you who have massacred the betrothed of my soul !” — Selim made no reply to my ravings, but had me carried to a chamber in his house, where the bleeding body of Selima

was

was at the same time conveyed by his order : —“ Contemplate thy own work,” said he, “ and estimate the vengeance I owe thee.”— After suffering the most dreadful inflictions of his wrath, he caused me to be borne from his accursed habitation and laid at the door of my aged father, where I was discovered by some of his servants who went out early in the morning ; they took me up fainting under my accumulated miseries, and bore me into the presence of my venerable heart-broken parent, whose condition was little better than my own. Running to me and pressing me in his trembling arms, the cries he uttered roused me from the stupor that overwhelmed my senses—I named to him the authors of my sufferings, and he flew from me like a man deprived of his reason, running from house to house, from friend to friend, till he had assembled together a vast multitude, who went with him to demand justice of the Cadie—Alas ! the justice of a judge may be corrupted, and the opulent Mahmoud had already corrupted that of the Cadie ; the renegade employed those powers which riches gave him over our injured family, and our complaints were useless.

My

My recovery was slow, but as my strength gathered my desperation increased, and I prayed for the blood of those savages to satisfy my vengeance. After trying in vain every possible means to accomplish my desire, I took up a resolution to leave that detestable country, where my only treasure and all my hopes were entombed together. I embarked in a vessel fitted out to make war against the *Maltese*, by whom we were beat and taken prisoners; the agony of fury that possessed me during the fight passed for determined valour, and they sold me for more than a common price.—It is here that I hope the extreme hard work I am every day forced to perform will at last procure me the single remedy my diseased mind can ever admit—balsamic to its woes will be the stroke of death—my life is a burden—I would seek my release from it by my own hand, but our great Prophet forbids it.—“ You have now,” continued the African, “ heard with compassion the issue of my dark-woven misfortunes; tell me then, Christian, if there has ever been another man on this habitable globe so lost to happiness, so abandoned to misery as myself.”

“ Yes,”

“ Yes,” said I, “ poor sufferer, there have been others of the human race equally afflicted ; to one of that number I owe my preservation from destruction—Heaven had pursued him with chastisements severe as your own—he had drank of a cup as bitter as that which poisons your felicity ; you suffered from savages of your own sex, he from a wretch who monstered the form of woman. He is gone to receive the recompence for his afflictions in Heaven, and may you, by pious submission to its inevitable award, follow him thither.”—He shook his head, turned from me, pursued his labour, and we parted to meet no more.

I found my imagination so much engrossed, my spirits so much oppressed by the rehearsal of this tragedy, that I was glad to dissipate my thoughts by turning them on objects less impressive. — Marseilles is a charming place to get rid of melancholy ideas.—Rosino had here many acquaintances, to whom he had presented me, and we were well received every where, so that, besides visiting from house to house, our time was sufficiently occupied in going about to see whatever was
curious

curious—Rosino was the best of guides, and he made it a point to shew me every thing. Having passed some days in this beautiful town, waiting for a vessel to transport us to Genoa, at last we heard of one which was going to Monaco—nothing could have pleased us better—we longed to see the famous Prince Honoré the Second, who reigned at this period, and we seized with avidity on the lucky occasion of satisfying our curiosity.

Honoré could not but make an interest in all hearts; influenced by a noble courage, and conducted by an exalted prudence, he had got rid of the tyrannic powers of Spain, who for a long time held him in subjection, and threatened his liberty: the whole of Europe took part in the revolution which his bravery and wisdom accomplished; they all rejoiced at the humiliation of the superb Spanish nation.—Honoré Grimald II. son of Hercule, Prince of Monaco, who was assassinated in the year 1604, during his tender infancy was bred in the dominions of Spain, the Grimalds, his ancestors, having for many ages been under the protection of that great crown, who had also found the advantage of

this alliance. After the death of Prince Hercule, Spain saw only an infant for his successor, and would fain have profited by his feebleness. The Prince of Valdetare, maternal uncle and tutor to Honoré, intended to sacrifice the interest of his pupil to his own political views, and with this design he sent to Monaco, a Spanish garrison, under the pretence, as he declared, of securing the sovereignty for the legitimate Prince, and to guard against the attacks of some Italian states.

Honoré, as he grew up, found imperious masters in these allies, and tyrants in his defenders; he complained, but his complaints were without effect, they one and all listened to them merely to give him new cause for complaining; disgusted by their subterfuges, he took another and more sensible part, which was, to watch their motions in silence, always looking out for a proper occasion to employ his courage and evince his resentment; by this wise moderation he hoped to remove an error from their minds, which he supposed to proceed from weakness, without suspecting the real principle upon which they acted,

acted, though of the most tremendous aspect to the security of his own power.

During this time the Spanish were taking every possible step to adjust the rights of the Prince and the liberties of the people according to their own measures; they placed about his highness's person, in the character of domestics, a number of their subjects, who were also the creatures of their will; their tyranny did not end here, they even tried at his liberty, so that the prince in some sort might have been called the slave of his own throne. For a long time Honoré, difficult as the task must have been when his eyes were once opened upon their treachery, yet he supported his wrongs with patience, quietly waiting the moment when his vengeance was likely to be crowned with success; every new insult which he daily received from his keepers, who insolently named themselves his defenders, seemed to pass unnoticed, whilst in reality they only instructed him to act with the greater circumspection, teaching him also what he should learn in his own defence, a part of their abundant dissimulation, that a discovery of his inclinations may not

spoil the accomplishment of his plans before they were ripe for execution.

Already he had turned his eyes on France, with the hope of gaining its assistance; Louis the Thirteenth had done more than hear his petition, he had promised him certain succour, but with all informed the prince, the aid he wanted must commence with his first driving from Monaco the Spanish garrison, a work attended with almost insurmountable difficulties. Honoré foresaw them all, and having amongst his natural subjects but a poor handful of soldiers who had any affection for his person, those, few as they were, who had attached themselves to his illustrious house, he cultivated with the greatest diligence; still these men were in no state of serving him, being drawn into the same cabals with their sovereign. As to the princes his neighbours, they would by no means expose themselves to a quarrel with Spain, so that Honoré stood alone, nearly destitute of help, even in prospective.—It is in cases of necessity that human powers are most forward in acts of exertion—his highness felt the truth of this observation, and his valiant spirit

spirit still grasped at the hope that, by courage united to prudence, he should at last get rid of his oppressors; burning with the ardent desire of liberty, he began to consider what was to be done—without soldiers, without any foreign aid, and encompassed round about by those on whom he wished to avenge himself for injuries that left their print on his memory, in short, he thought of nothing but how to recover a sovereignty which the Spanish now considered as their own absolute property.

After much wise deliberation he took up his project, and with equal discernment fixed upon two men in whose honesty he could trust, of whose abilities he was persuaded, and whose zeal had been tried; to these he spoke, and with these he reposed his confidence, who faithfully promised to perform all that the prince required of them; in the mean time he manœuvred his own steps with all imaginable policy, so as to defy the Argus eyes of his watchers from tracing them. Notwithstanding the troubles that filled his soul with agitation, so great was his command of countenance, that it underwent no

change from his internal conflicts; this mastery which he had obtained over his features was a disguise through which the Spanish could not penetrate—it made them believe he was ignorant of his own misfortune—it spoke him totally blind to their duplicity, and filled them with the most sanguine hopes of reducing him to certain slavery: indeed, one may say, that if Heaven itself had not taken part with him in his enterprize, he must have put on the chains they had forged for him. What would have made this fate inevitable must have happened but for Divine interference—I am going to relate the circumstance; it was this:—Honoré had written a letter which he intended sending to Louis of France, recounting to that monarch the measures he was taking to drive the Spanish out of Monaco; this letter dropped from his pocket, which, by discovering his project, would have utterly ruined him, if it had not been picked up by a Spanish page, who fortunately could not read, and still more fortunately gave it into the hands of the prince's almoner, who put it into those of his master. The extreme peril he had ran, and the miraculous chance that preserved him from detection,

tection, persuaded Honoré that Providence worked for him; under the influence of this idea, nothing of great, nothing of wonderful, nothing of danger was too much for his undertaking, and the plans he had sketched out he immediately began to put in execution.

He had drawn round him by degrees, from all parts of his country, a great number of young robust men, under pretence of employing them on repairs that his palace required, and to man a ship which he had caused to be built for his son's amusement; the Spanish, who did not see them go to the prince above two or three at a time, entertained no suspicion of what he was about; and the better to prevent surmises as well as accidents, his highness did not acquaint these men with any part of his intentions, that if they should get themselves entangled with the Spanish they might not have it in their power to betray him, or if questioned by them, they might be able to say with truth that the prince had only spoken to them on indifferent matters; whilst those who were better instructed in the designs of their mas-

ter remained shut up in the palace by his own order, as persons he desired to punish for some made-up offence which he charged them with having committed; however, this was not so well contrived, but that, had any one examined into the nature of that fault which had drawn down such rigorous treatment, the objects on whom it fell might have been very much puzzled how to paint themselves black enough to deserve it.

Till the whole momentous scheme had almost ripened to perfection, Honoré concealed it from nobody more than the marquis his son, because he doubted his youth, and he doubted his prudence; but now the time was come when he could no longer continue his reserve, and he spoke to him in this manner:

“ That day, my son, that day is arrived, when, by the blessing of Providence, we may recover our liberty, when we may revenge on our Spanish tormenters the injuries they have heaped upon us; yes, my dear son, this day will decide your future destiny, my own, and that of my subjects—I do not exhort you to courage—I do not call upon
you

you to be resolute, because I know you possess both courage and resolution; nor have I any doubts that you will infinitely prefer honourable death to a life of abject slavery—together we go to the combat, together we will strike our blows, that those who behold their prince and his son ready to die for the liberty of their country may be inspired by example and freely join their blood with ours in a cause so glorious.”

The marquis heard with animated astonishment of this wonderful enterprize; he feared greatly, but he did not fear for himself; he felt only for the risk of a life more valuable, for the life of his father, and swore to defend it with his own. — Honoré next commanded his supposed prisoners, who in fact were his steady adherents, to be all turned into a large room, pretending that he meant to examine them privately, in order to set them at liberty or straighten their confinement, as the circumstances of their several faults may appear to deserve: no sooner did the sovereign shew himself in this convention than every faithful member of it cast themselves at his feet, impressed with reverence, burning

burning with gratitude, and trembling with impatience; whilst that great prince, notwithstanding all the spirit he had shewn, and all that he had yet to shew, observed a profound silence, permitting his manly countenance to speak that embarrassment which must arise from the uncertainty of the dangerous undertaking to which he was going to conduct them.

The marquis, who stood at his side, did not open his lips, but bore in his eyes such tokens of affliction for the perils of his father that made their friends suppose something new must have happened to disturb the minds of their leaders; possessed with this opinion, they begged with respectful eagerness that the prince would be pleased to declare his intentions.

“You already know,” said he, “my good and well-beloved subjects, that the Prince of Valdetare, my uncle and my tutor, has grossly abused the powers Nature and education gave him over me as his nephew and his pupil. You know that he has audaciously sent into this city a host of perfidious Spaniards,

Spaniards, to make themselves masters of my person, my state, perhaps my life; at least they grasp at the entire possession of this country, in the greedy idea of adding it to the number of their other unjust conquests. And shall we not guard against this calamity?—Speak, my friends; for to this purpose, under divers pretences, have I assembled you together. I confide myself to you—I place my destiny in your hands—I restore your liberty, secure you mine, and partake of it with your legitimate sovereign. Now speak, and tell me what I am to expect from your courage, from your love, and from your fidelity?

“Victory! Victory!” cried they all out in one voice; “we die for our prince, or we live only to serve him!” “It is well,” said the hero; “my son and I will put ourselves at your head, to shew you the way of living or dying with honour.” He afterwards distributed amongst them arms, of which he had long been making a secret collection: to these men he joined his guards, as well as all those who composed his household, which altogether formed a determined, though not
a great

a great troop; himself he placed in front—the Marquis stood at his side; a young prince, who inherited the valour and the virtues of his ancestors, both together resembling a blooming Telemachus and a wise Ulysses, each eager to lay down their life for the preservation of the other. Honoré saw with transport the noble ardour that testified itself in the illumined countenance of his son, who promised one day to be the glory of his succession; but the people of Monaco had never the good fortune to see him seated on the throne of his father, who remained behind to lament the extinction of his dearest hopes.

This little army watched with impatience the slow approaches of night, when the Spanish should be retired to their quarters, and overwhelmed with sleep—at last the wished-for moment arrived, when being mustered into three *corps*, the prince putting himself at the head of the first; the marquis, his son, commanding the second; with a captain of the guards to conduct the third. Thus marshalled, they passed the palace gates
in

in good order, marching briskly to the principal port of the Spanish soldiers, whom they attacked with all the fury their enterprise required; the emulation by which every individual was animated seemed to be the inspiration of Heaven. Astonished to be awakened from sleep by the first blows of their enemy, the Spaniards for a moment suspended their resistance, but the next flew to their arms, and made no mean defence; whilst Honoré, and his party, dealt death around them in spite of all opposition. The fury was now equal on all sides; the Monacoes had to fight against regular, well-disciplined troops; on the other hand, this advantage on the enemy's side was more than overbalanced by the courageous ardour of the prince, the marquis, and the other chief who commanded; as well as by the spirit of virtue that animated the soul of each man who fought under them to follow the bright example of their magnanimous leaders.

Providence had previously decided in favour of the Monacoes, and the Spanish were at last constrained to lay down their arms, calling

calling out upon their conquerors for quarter and for mercy.

The noise of this defeat soon spread itself every where; amongst other places it reached the inhabitants of a very pretty town belonging to the principality, named *Menton*; these people immediately armed themselves, and flew to the aid of their prince; but his glory was already at the full. The Count de Aléo, governor of Provence, also heard of Honoré's success, and sent him a battalion to replace the Spanish garrison, conformable with the secret treaty which had been concluded with the Court of France. Thus did this great warrior break asunder the cord with which he had been bound to the throne of Spain: he did more, for when the vanquished foe sued for his alliance, he received their propositions, and entered with them into such engagements as would be useful or honourable to his country.

Charmed as I have always been to see tyranny deprived of its power, I heard of this noble victory, as well as the victor's generosity,

rosity, with so much approbation, that I embarked with inexpressible pleasure for the scene of action, and in a short time arrived at Monaco. The town and citadel are built on a rock, the bottom of which is washed by the sea; whilst the port seems to rise out of the sea, in the form of an amphitheatre, and has from the point of view in which I beheld it a most beautiful appearance: our principal gratification was not derived from inanimate objects, we had the felicity of a presentation to that charming prince, for whose character we entertained such perfect respect, and who by his wit and politeness equally delighted us. We also, during the short time we rested at Monaco, visited Menton and Roccabruno—in short, we found this whole country enchantingly delicious; I use this expression rather than any other, because the profusion of orange trees abounding everywhere do not merely charm the eye, but disperse a ravishing sweetness through the whole atmosphere; and it was almost with regret that I turned my back on this cabinet of perfumes, to set out for Leghorn, whither we went in a small vessel, although accommodated

dated agreeably enough, or at least we thought so; when the mind is full of happiness, how lovely—how interesting is the colouring it gives to every thing around us—and what happiness could be more ecstatic than that which occupied the heart of Rosino and my own—were we not going into the bosom of his family—were we not going to be united for ever.

He had written to his parents from Marseilles, who immediately quitted Florence to receive us at Leghorn; seeing our vessel near the shore, they had not patience to wait longer, but came off to us in a boat. Oh! with what ardour did they embrace their amiable, their beloved son—and how tender were the caresses they bestowed on the object of his affections; for my part, I thought them the most agreeable people in the world, and that I should always esteem them as well for their own, as for the sake of Rosino.

From Leghorn we proceeded to Florence, where we found every thing prepared with great splendour for the ceremony of our marriage,

riage, which was solemnized a few days after; when I had the supreme felicity to call myself the wife of the man who loved me—the man I loved—the man who was adored by his family, honoured by his friends, and esteemed by every body: what better fortune could happen to me? No wish of my heart being left ungratified, I began to form new ones—one alone occupied me; it was, that the felicity I now enjoyed might be as permanent as it was lively, fervent and unalloyed!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



